7

MATURE CONTENT

SUZUKA

KOUJI SEO

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SUZUKA

7

Kouji Seo

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David Ury

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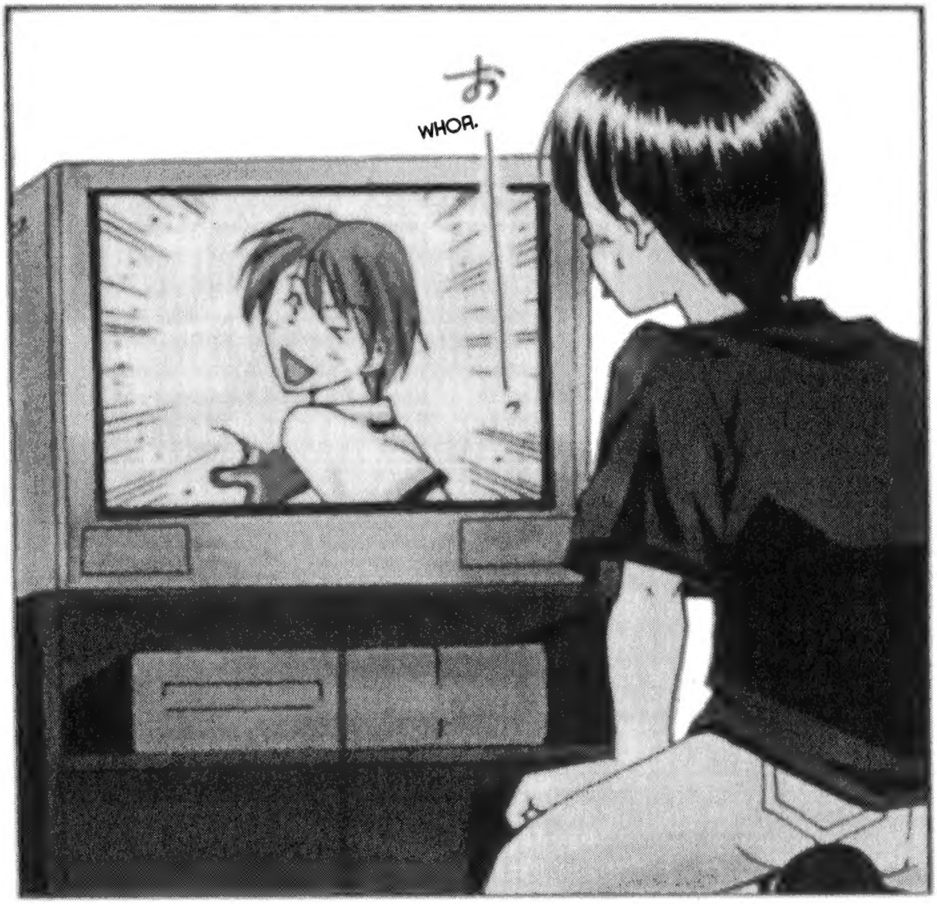
A Note from the Author



BY THE TIME THIS COMIC COMES OUT, THE SUZUKA *ANIME WILL BE ON TV. MY OWN MANGA WILL BE MADE INTO A REAL-LIFE ANIME. IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE! I'M GOING TO HAVE TO STAY UP LATE SO I CAN WATCH IT.*

-kun: This suffix is used at the end of boys' names to express familiarity or endearment. It is also sometimes used by men among friends, or when addressing someone younger or of a lower station.

-chan: This is used to express endearment, mostly toward girls. It is also used for little boys, pets, and even among lovers. It gives a sense of childish cuteness.

Bozu: This is an informal way to refer to a boy, similar to the English terms "kid" and "squirt."

Sempai/Senpai: This title suggests that the addressee is one's senior in a group or organization. It is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to their upperclassmen as "sempai." It can also be used in the workplace, such as when a newer employee addresses an employee who has seniority in the company.

Kohai: This is the opposite of "sempai" and is used toward underclassmen in school or newcomers in the workplace. It connotes that the addressee is of a lower station.

Sensei: Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

[blank]: This is usually forgotten in these lists, but it is perhaps the most significant difference between Japanese and English. The lack of honorific means that the speaker has permission to address the person in a very intimate way. Usually, only family, spouses, or very close friends have this kind of permission. Known as *yobisute,* it can be gratifying when someone who has earned the intimacy starts to call one by one's name without an honorific. But when that intimacy hasn't been earned, it can be very insulting.

Honorifics Explained

Throughout the Del Rey Manga books, you will find Japanese honorifics left intact in the translations. For those not familiar with how the Japanese use honorifics and, more important, how they differ from American honorifics, we present this brief overview.

Politeness has always been a critical facet of Japanese culture. Ever since the feudal era, when Japan was a highly stratified society, use of honorifics—which can be defined as polite speech that indicates relationship or status—has played an essential role in the Japanese language. When addressing someone in Japanese, an honorific usually takes the form of a suffix attached to one's name (example: "Asuna-san"), is used as a title at the end of one's name, or appears in place of the name itself (example: "Negi-sensei," or simply "Sensei!").

Honorifics can be expressions of respect or endearment. In the context of manga and anime, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations leave out these important honorifics and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them. Here, instead, is a guide to some of the honorifics you may encounter in Del Rey Manga.

-san:	This is the most common honorific and is equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., or Mrs. It is the all-purpose honorific and can be used in any situation where politeness is required.
-sama:	This is one level higher than "-san." It is used to confer great respect.
-dono:	This comes from the word "tono," which means "lord." It is an even higher level than "-sama" and confers utmost respect.

SUZUKA

7

Kouji Seo

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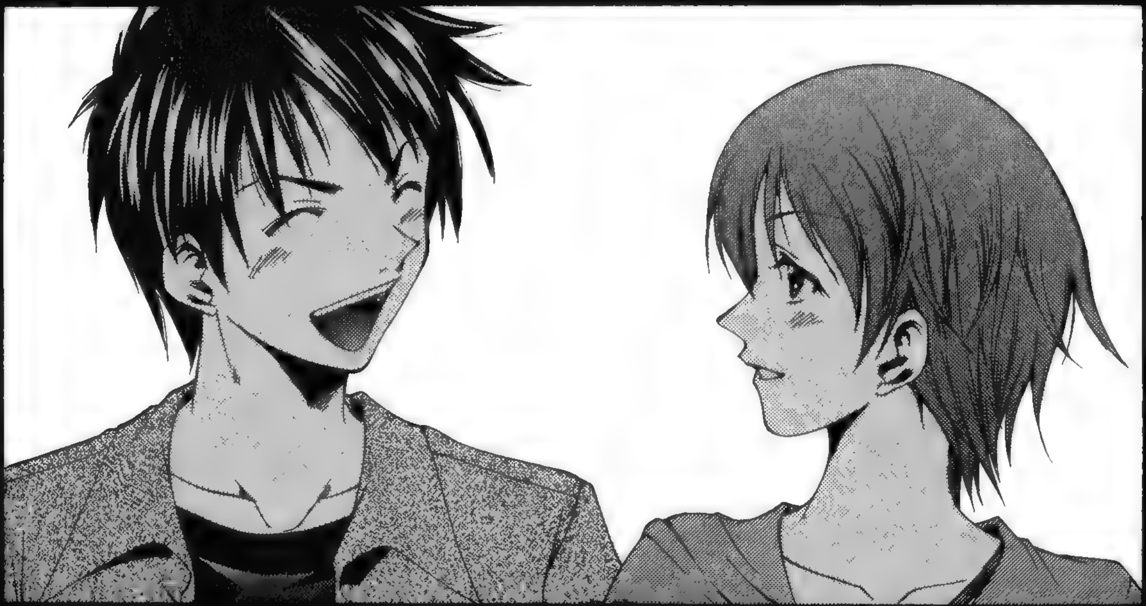
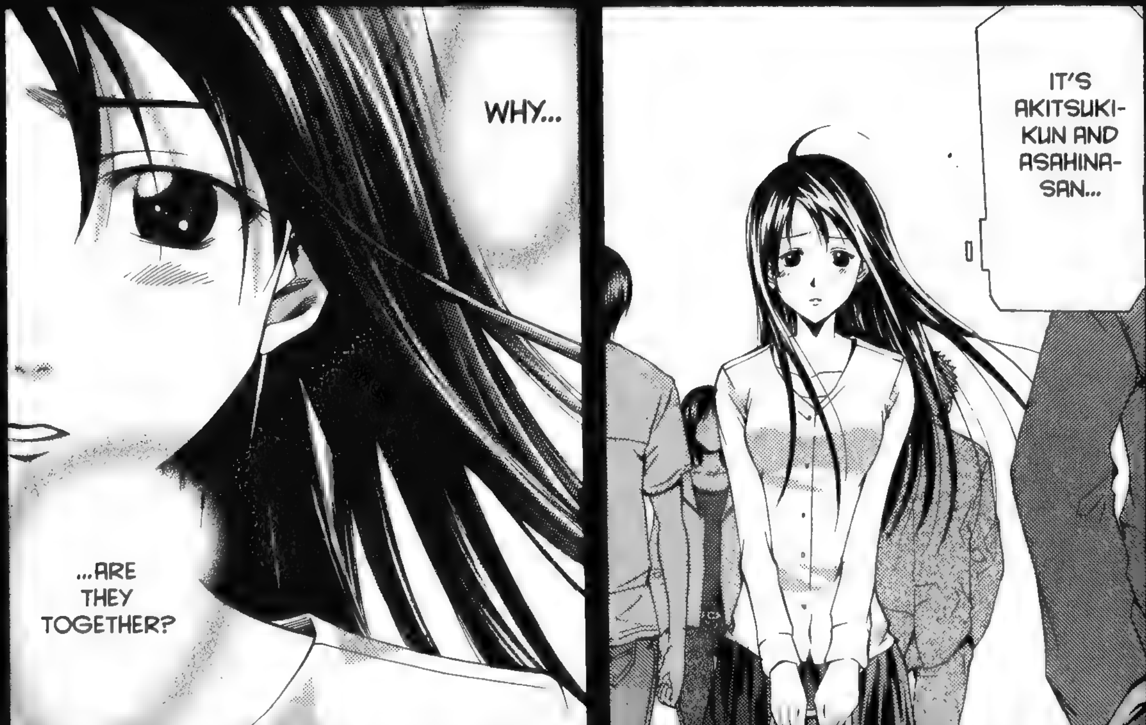
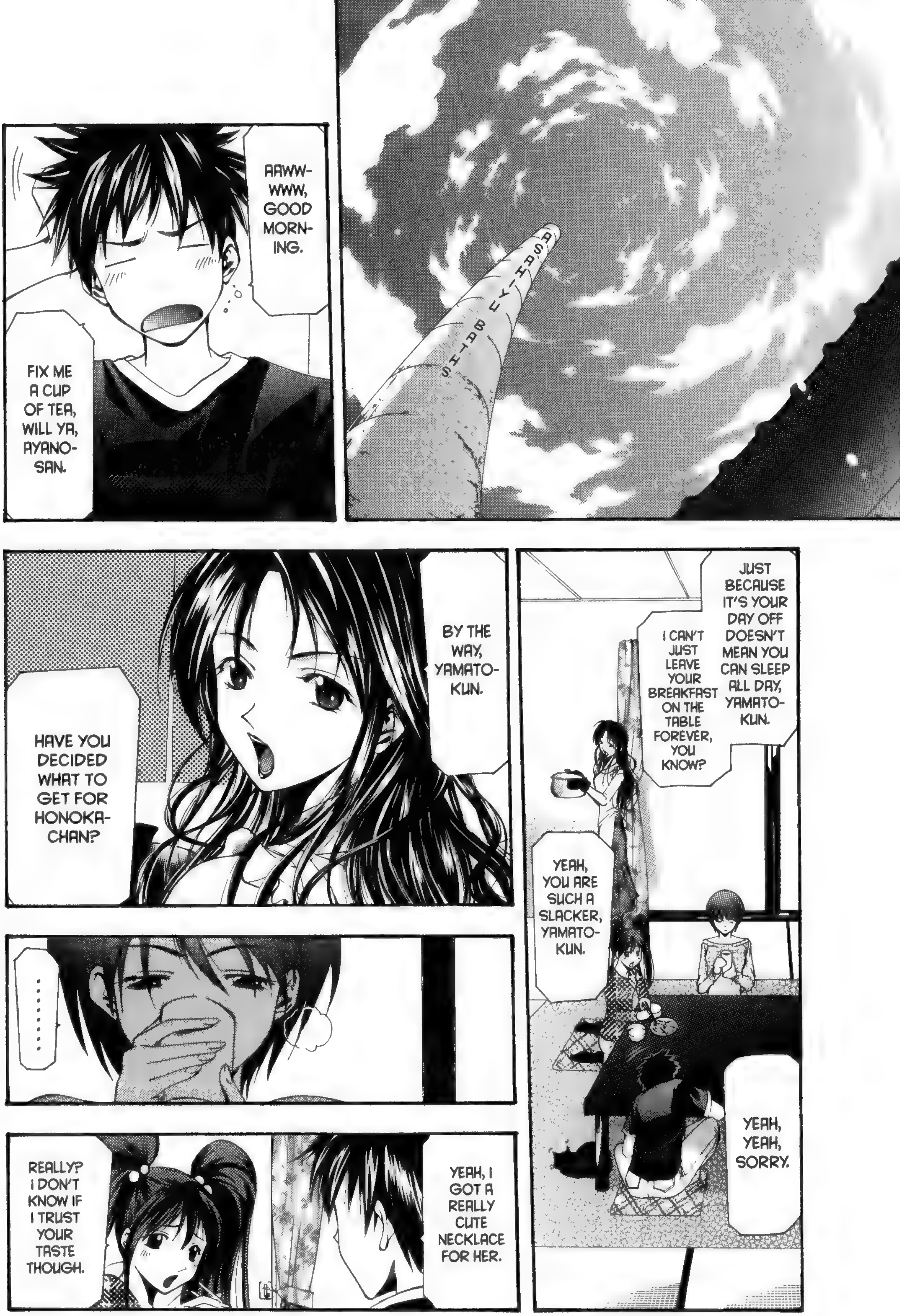
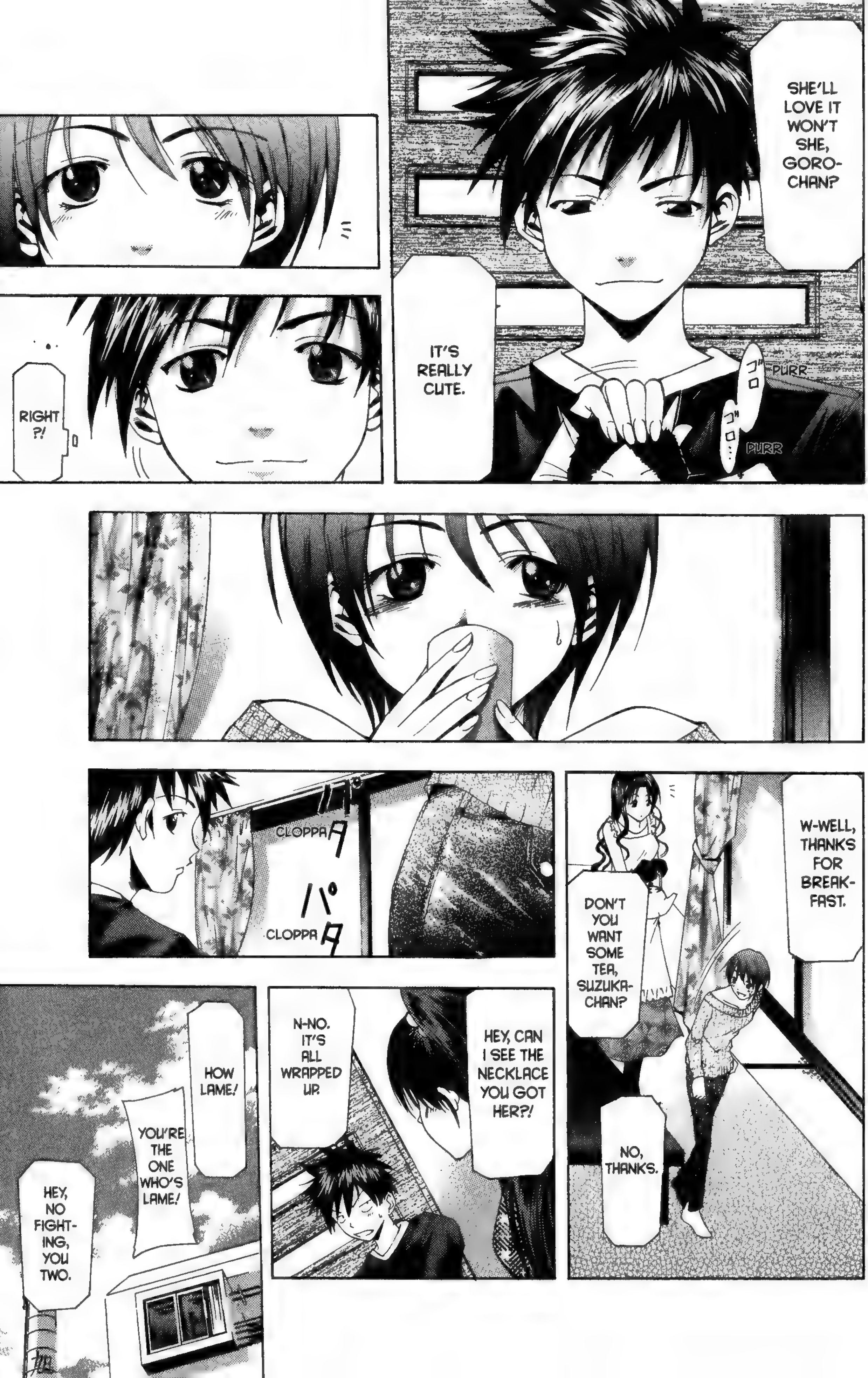


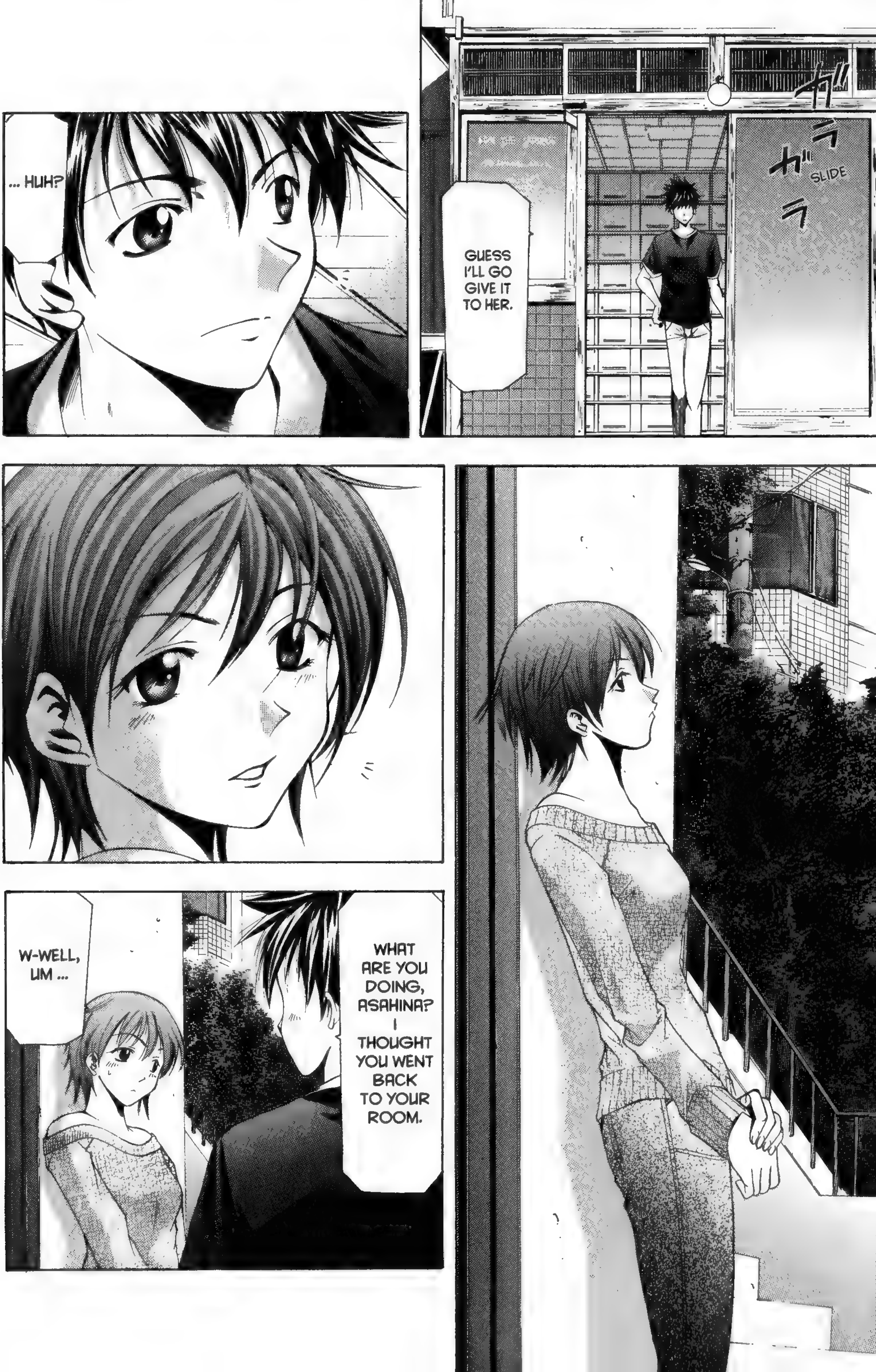
SUZUKA

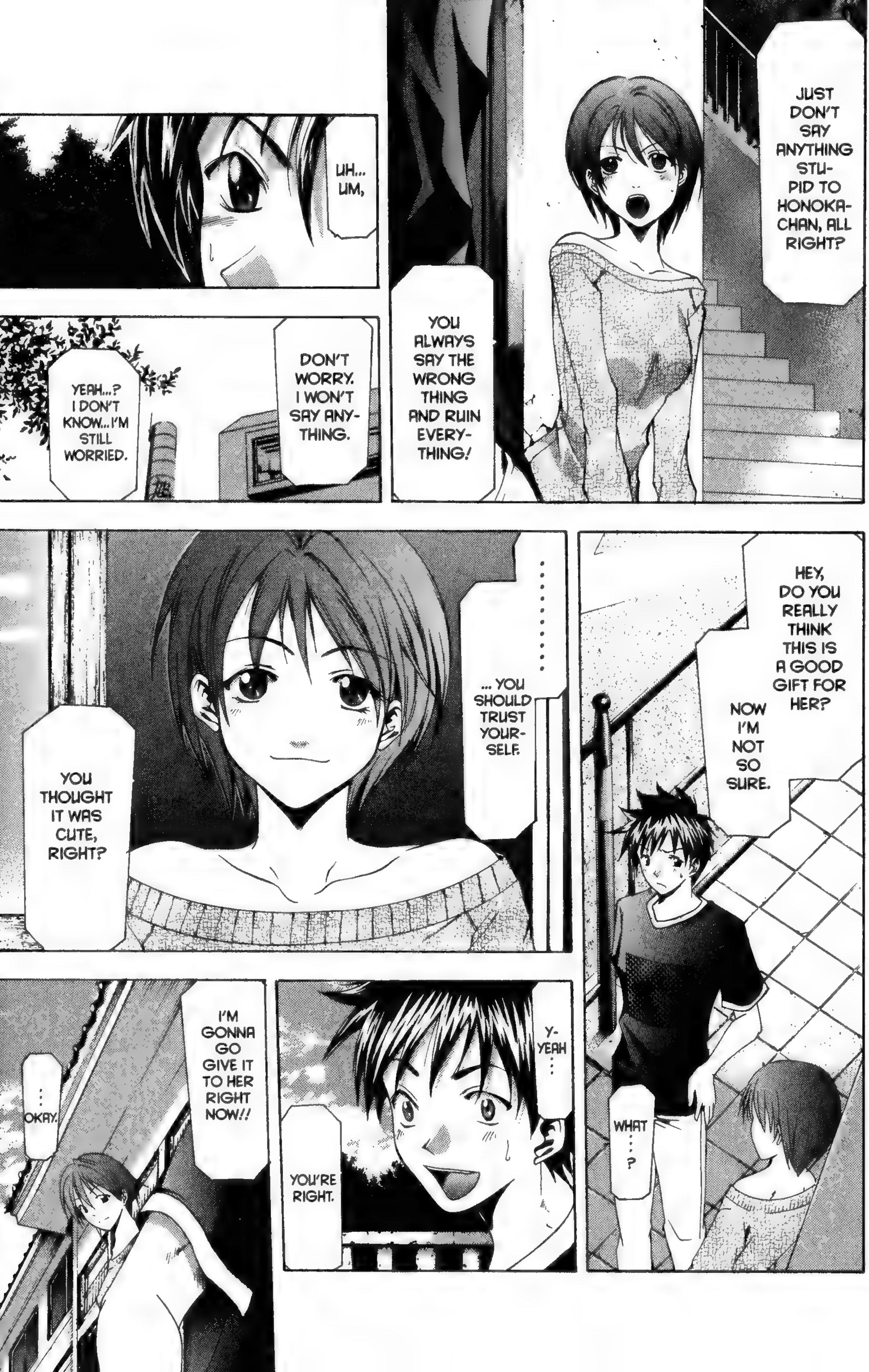
#50 THE GIFT

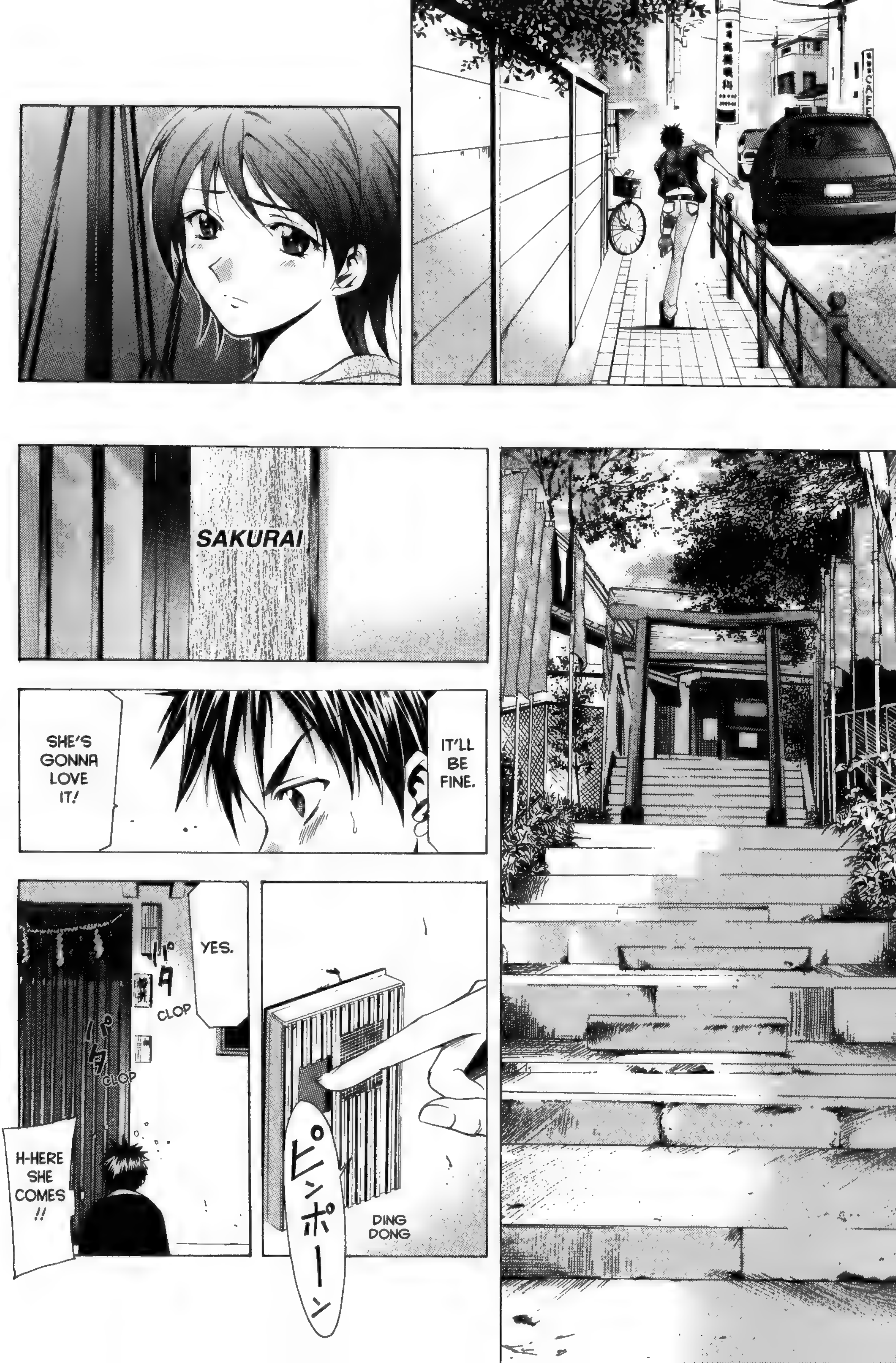

IT'S AKITSUKI-KUN AND ASAHINA-SAN...
WHY...
...ARE THEY TOGETHER?

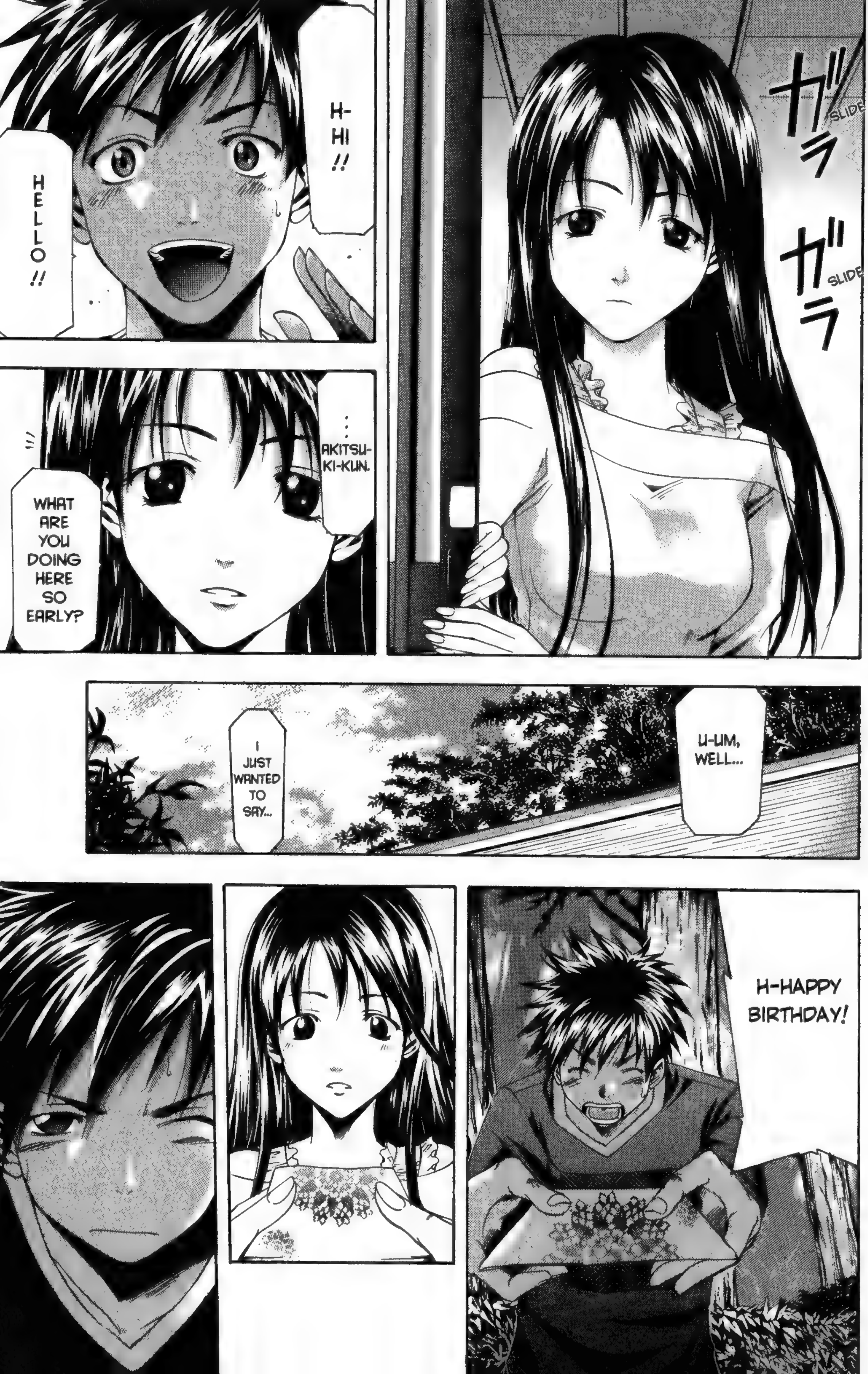

ASAHI-YU BATHS
AAWW-WWW, GOOD MORNING.
FIX ME A CUP OF TEA, WILL YA, AYANO-SAN.
JUST BECAUSE IT'S YOUR DAY OFF DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN SLEEP ALL DAY, YAMATO-KUN.
I CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOUR BREAKFAST ON THE TABLE FOREVER, YOU KNOW?
YEAH, YOU ARE SUCH A SLACKER, YAMATO-KUN.
YEAH, YEAH, SORRY.
BY THE WAY, YAMATO-KUN.
HAVE YOU DECIDED WHAT TO GET FOR HONOKA-CHAN?
……
YEAH, I GOT A REALLY CUTE NECKLACE FOR HER.
REALLY? I DON'T KNOW IF I TRUST YOUR TASTE THOUGH.

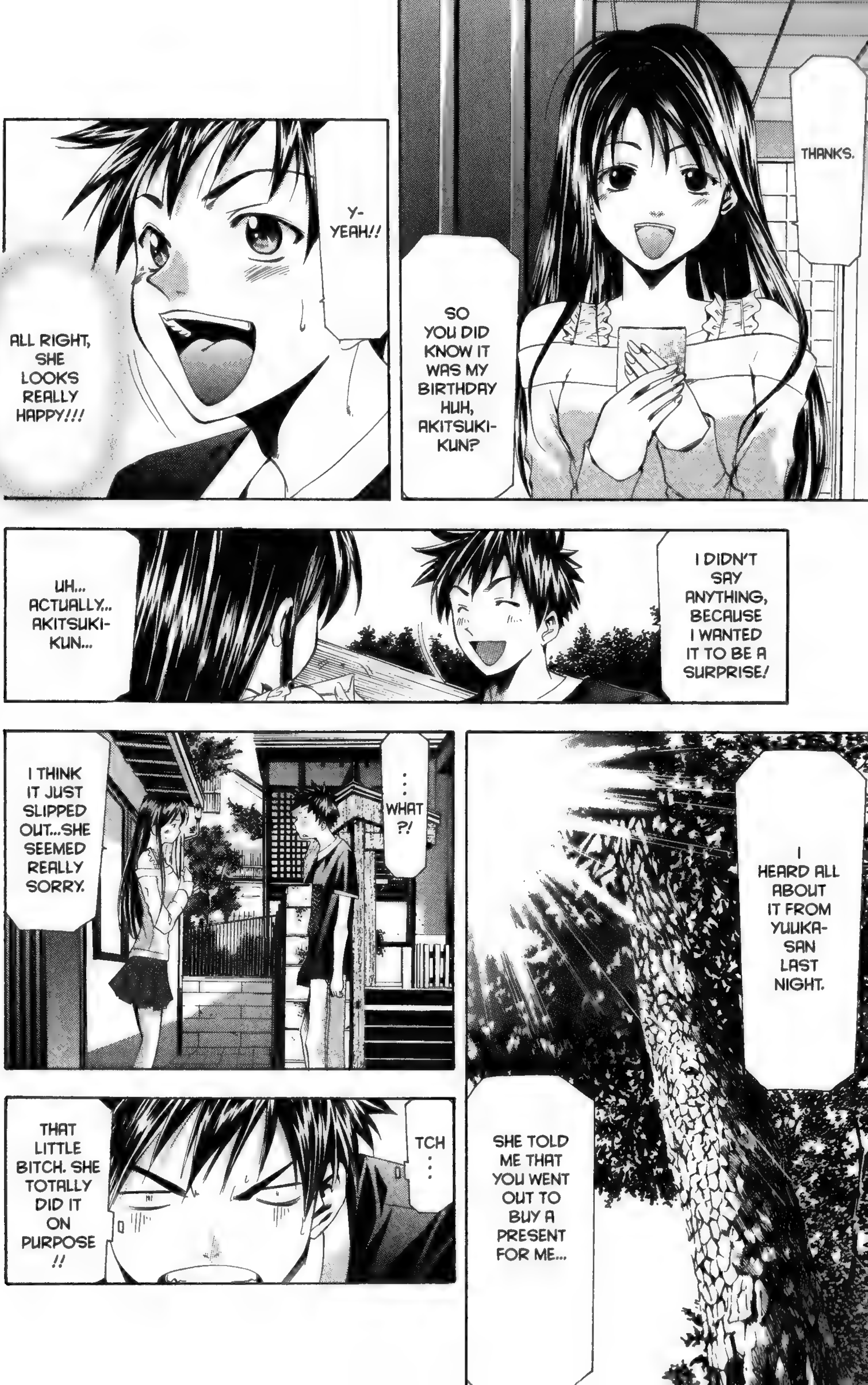

SHE'LL LOVE IT WON'T SHE, GORO-CHAN?
IT'S REALLY CUTE.
ゴロ PURR
ゴロ… PURR
RIGHT?!
W-WELL, THANKS FOR BREAKFAST.
DON'T YOU WANT SOME TEA, SUZUKA-CHAN?
NO, THANKS.
パタ CLOPPA
パタ CLOPPA
HEY, CAN I SEE THE NECKLACE YOU GOT HER?!
N-NO. IT'S ALL WRAPPED UP.
HOW LAME!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S LAME!
HEY, NO FIGHTING, YOU TWO.

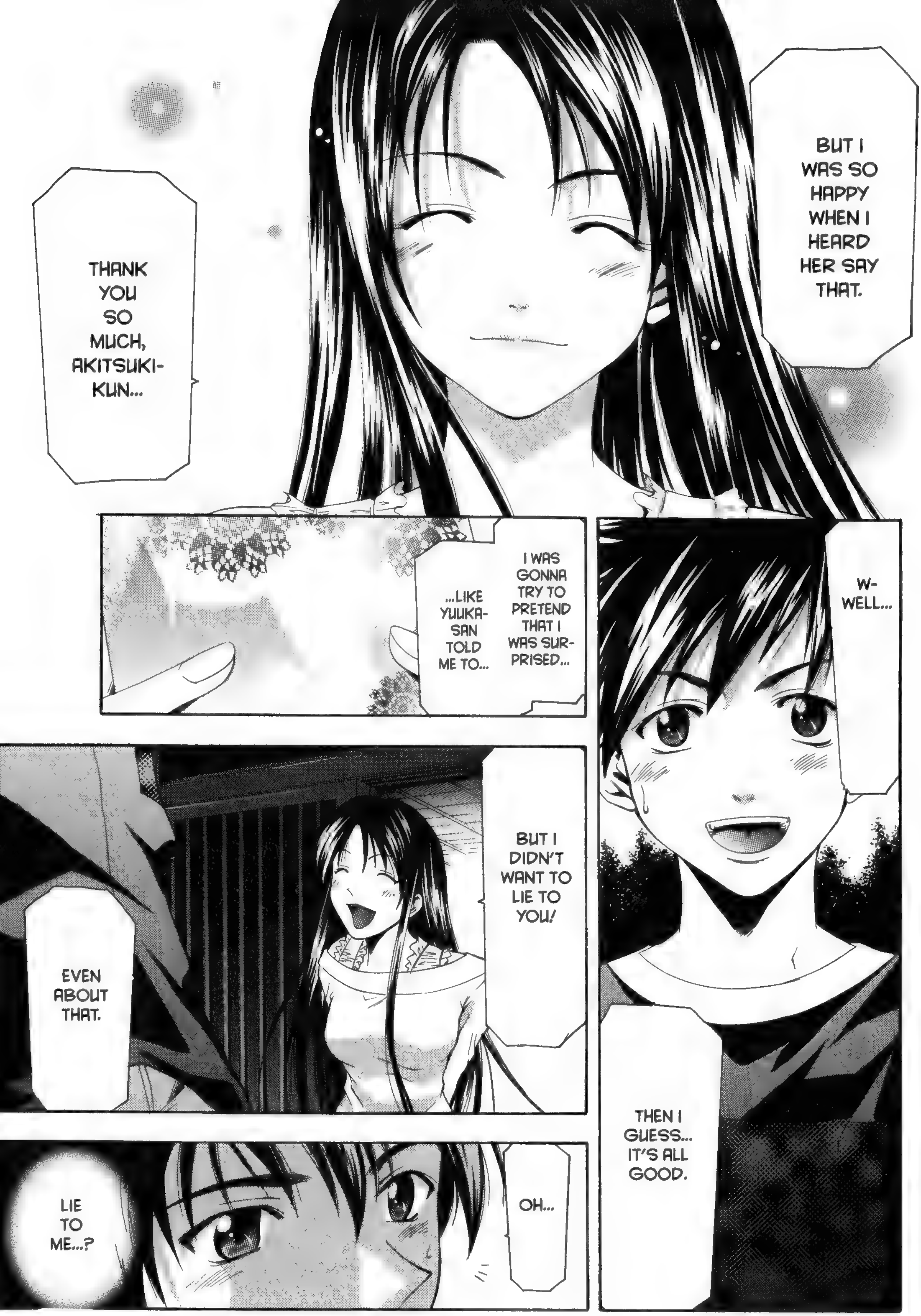

ガラガラ
SLIDE
GUESS I'LL GO GIVE IT TO HER.
... HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ASAHINA? I THOUGHT YOU WENT BACK TO YOUR ROOM.
W-WELL, UM ...

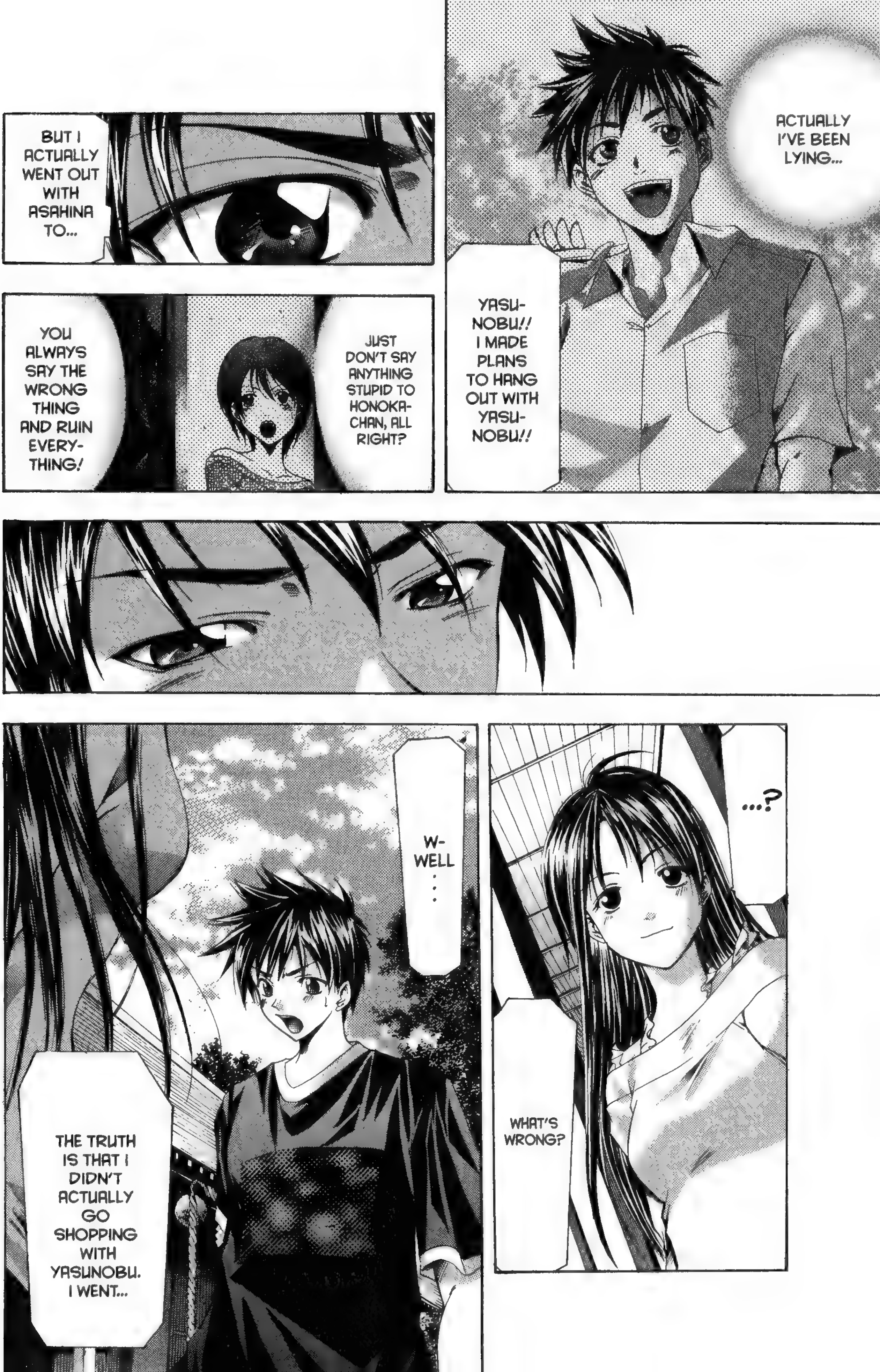

JUST DON'T SAY ANYTHING STUPID TO HONOKA-CHAN, ALL RIGHT?
YOU ALWAYS SAY THE WRONG THING AND RUIN EVERYTHING!
UH... UM,
DON'T WORRY. I WON'T SAY ANYTHING.
YEAH...? I DON'T KNOW...I'M STILL WORRIED.
HEY, DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS IS A GOOD GIFT FOR HER?
NOW I'M NOT SO SURE.
WHAT...?
....
...YOU SHOULD TRUST YOURSELF.
YOU THOUGHT IT WAS CUTE, RIGHT?
Y-YEAH...
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M GONNA GO GIVE IT TO HER RIGHT NOW!!
...OKAY.

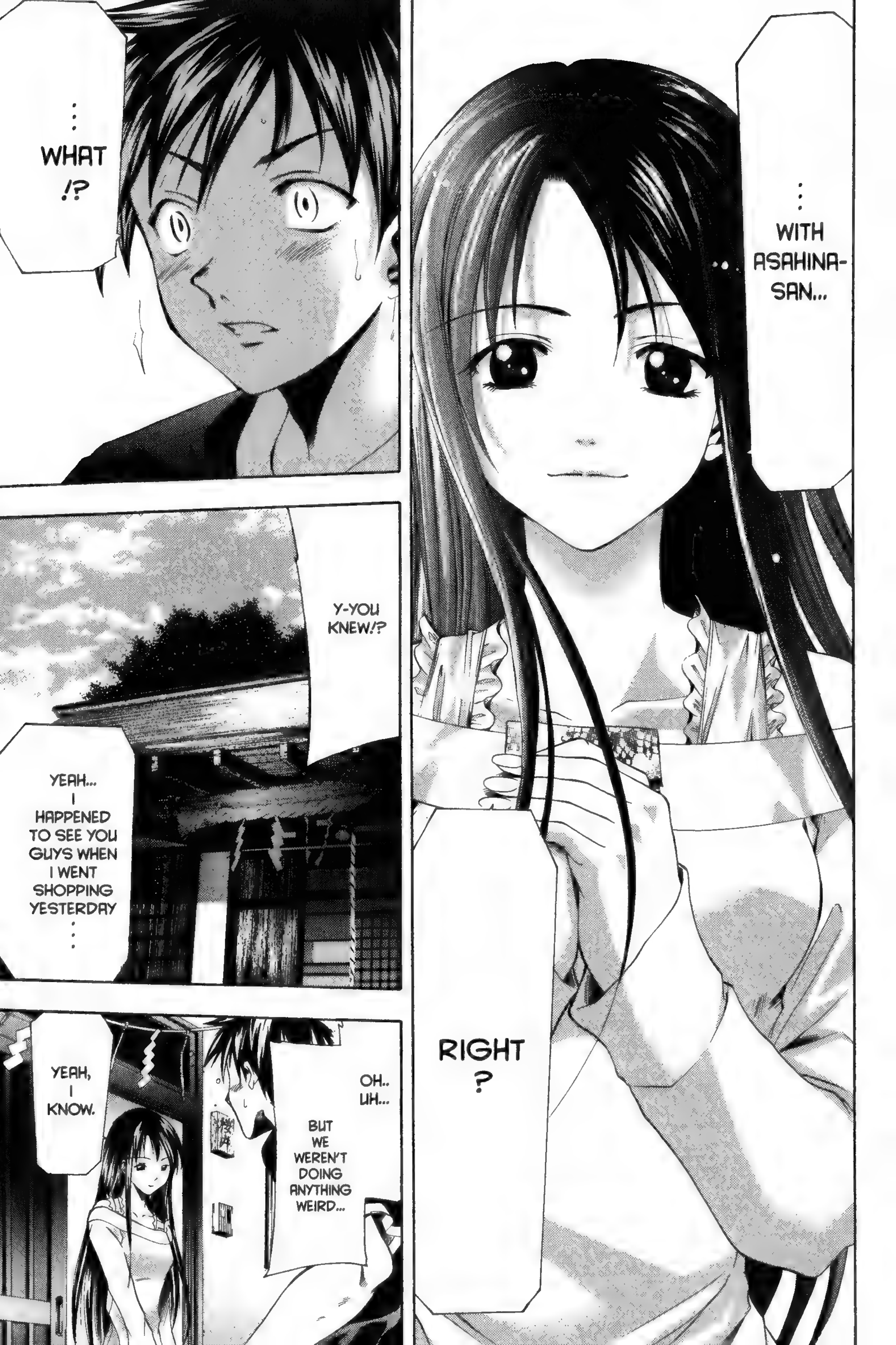

CAFE
SAKURAI
IT'LL BE FINE.
SHE'S GONNA LOVE IT!
ピンポーン
DING DONG
YES.
パタ
CLOP
パタ
CLOP
H-HERE SHE COMES!!

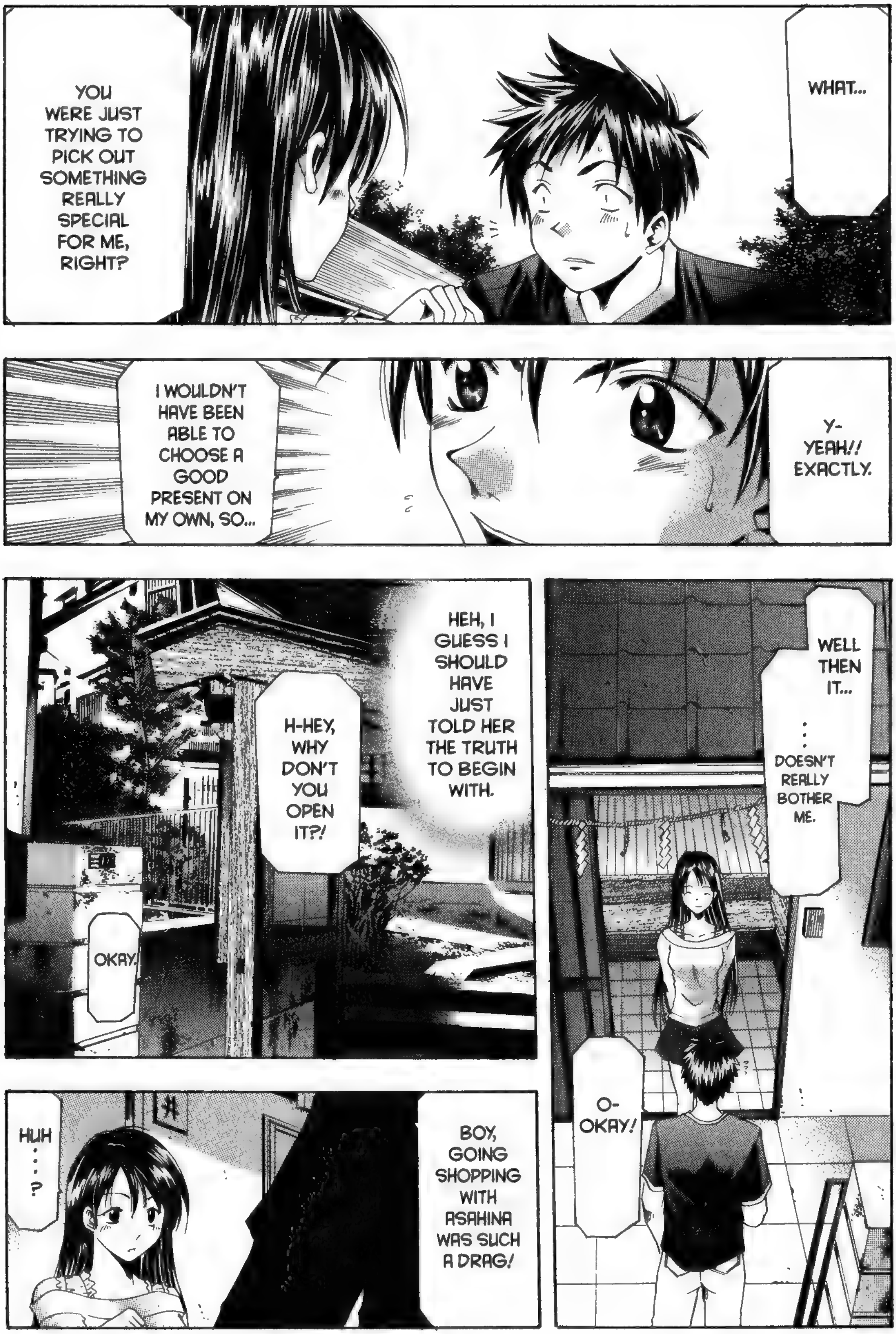

ガラ
SLIDE
ガラ
SLIDE
H-HI!!
HELLO!!
...AKITSUKI-KUN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE SO EARLY?
U-UM, WELL...
I JUST WANTED TO SAY...
H-HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

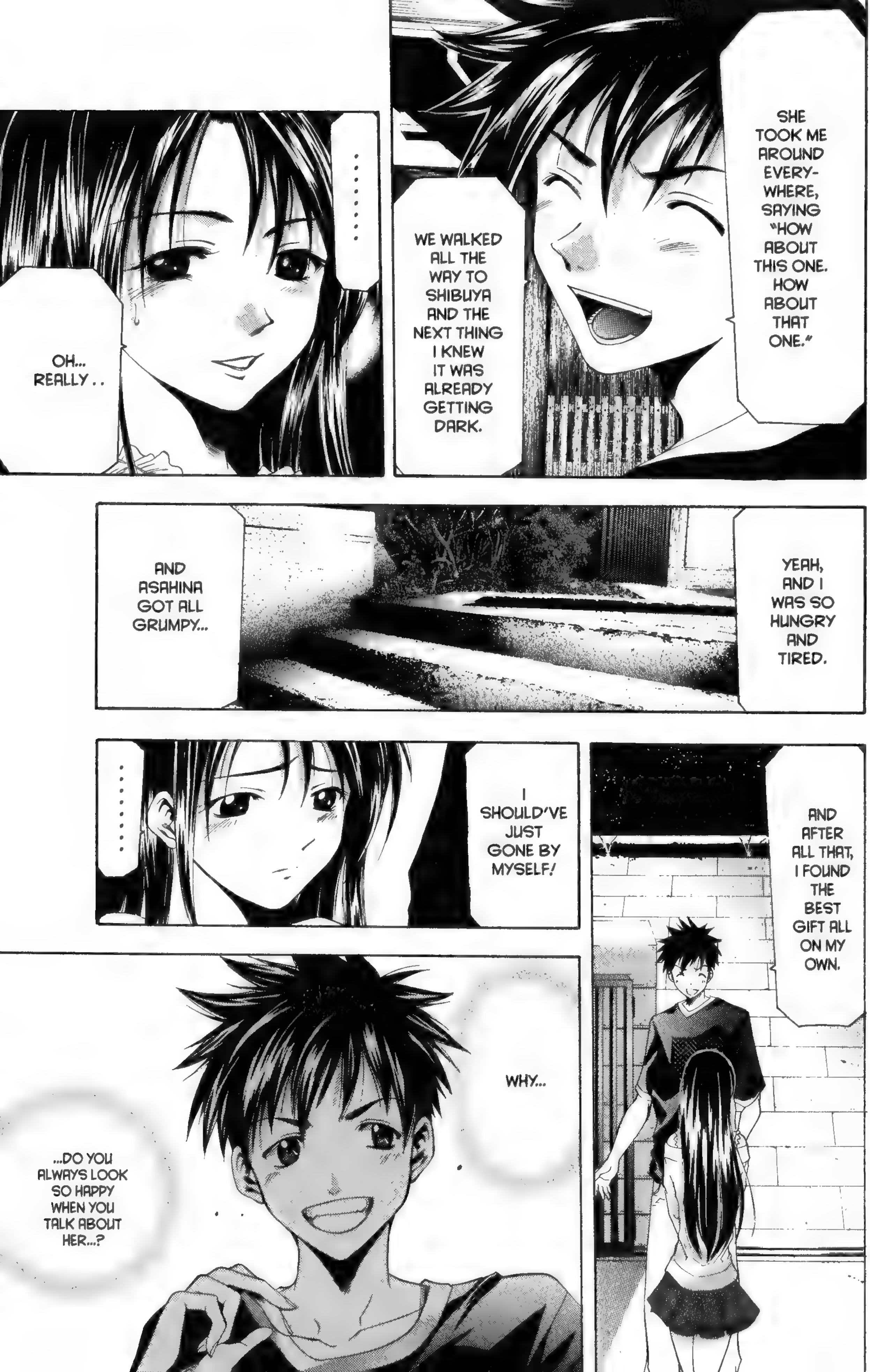

THANKS.
SO YOU DID KNOW IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY HUH, AKITSUKI-KUN?
Y-YEAH!!
ALL RIGHT, SHE LOOKS REALLY HAPPY!!!
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING, BECAUSE I WANTED IT TO BE A SURPRISE!
UH... ACTUALLY... AKITSUKI-KUN...
I HEARD ALL ABOUT IT FROM YUUKA-SAN LAST NIGHT.
SHE TOLD ME THAT YOU WENT OUT TO BUY A PRESENT FOR ME...
...WHAT?!
I THINK IT JUST SLIPPED OUT...SHE SEEMED REALLY SORRY.
TCH...
THAT LITTLE BITCH. SHE TOTALLY DID IT ON PURPOSE!!

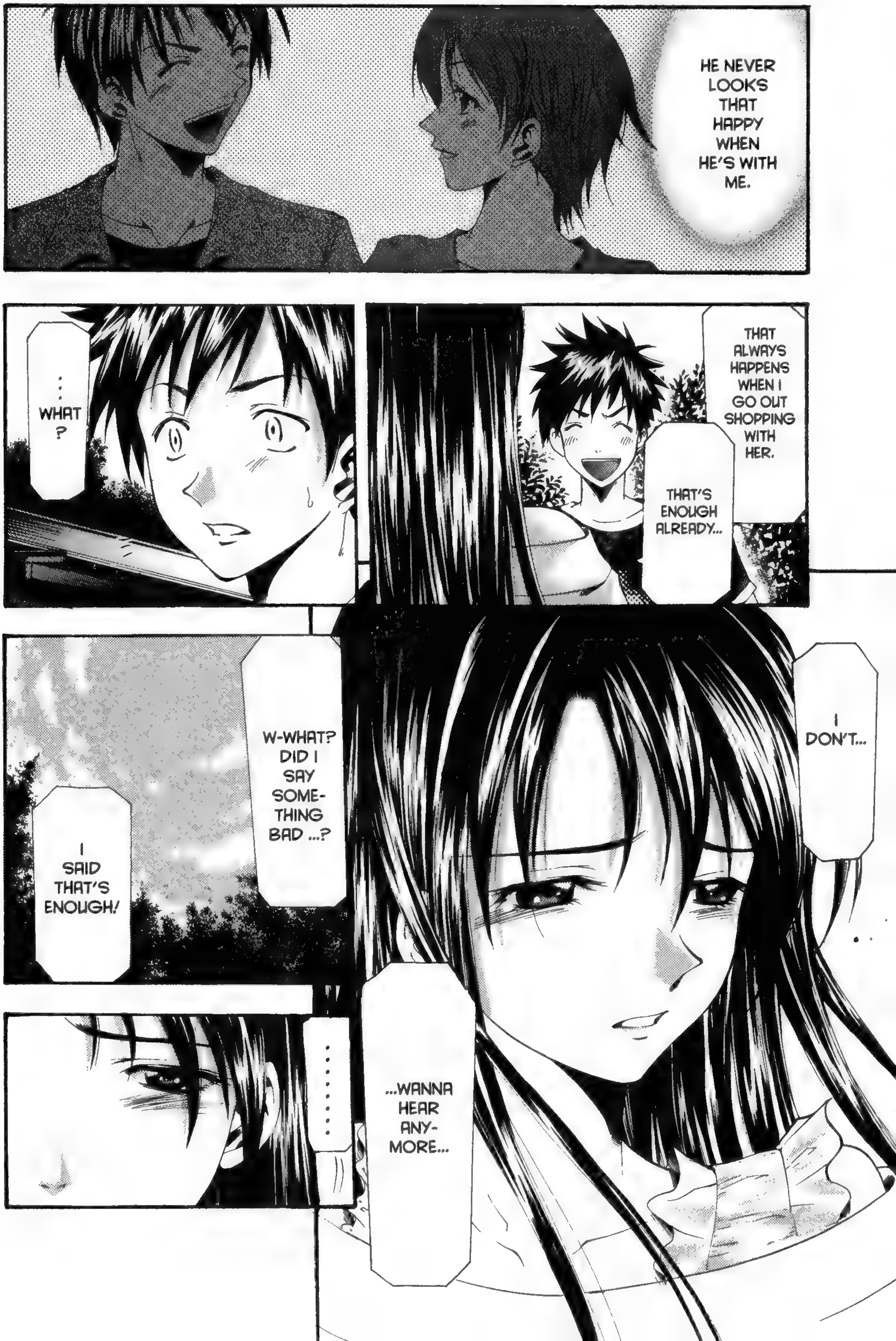

BUT I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN I HEARD HER SAY THAT.
THANK YOU SO MUCH, AKITSUKI-KUN...
W-WELL...
I WAS GONNA TRY TO PRETEND THAT I WAS SURPRISED...
...LIKE YUUKA-SAN TOLD ME TO...
BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO LIE TO YOU!
EVEN ABOUT THAT.
THEN I GUESS... IT'S ALL GOOD.
OH...
LIE TO ME...?

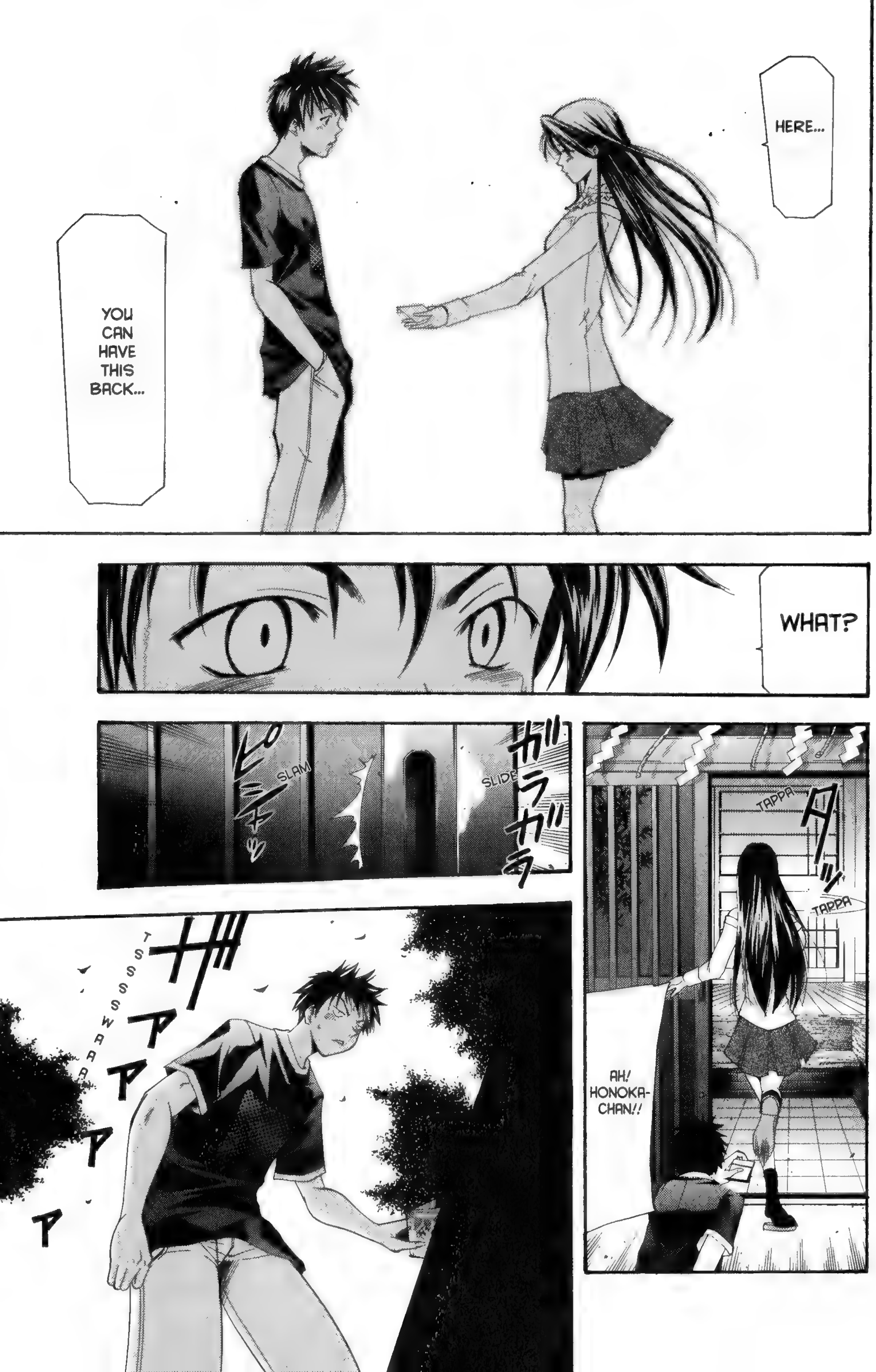

ACTUALLY I'VE BEEN LYING...
YASUNOBU!! I MADE PLANS TO HANG OUT WITH YASUNOBU!!
BUT I ACTUALLY WENT OUT WITH ASAHINA TO...
JUST DON'T SAY ANYTHING STUPID TO HONOKA-CHAN, ALL RIGHT?
YOU ALWAYS SAY THE WRONG THING AND RUIN EVERYTHING!
...?
WHAT'S WRONG?
W-WELL...
THE TRUTH IS THAT I DIDN'T ACTUALLY GO SHOPPING WITH YASUNOBU. I WENT...

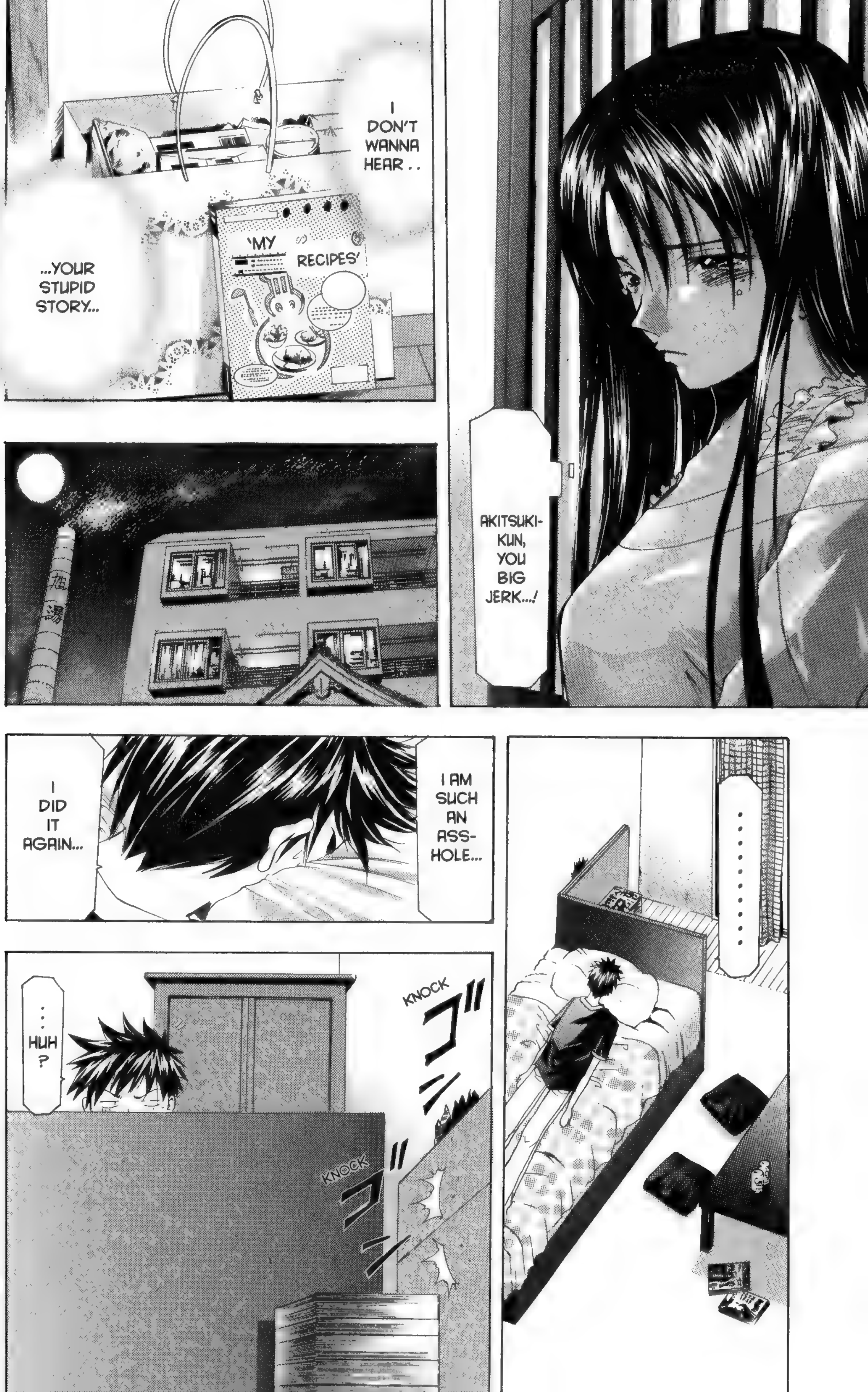

... WITH ASAHINA-SAN...
RIGHT?
... WHAT!?
Y-YOU KNEW!?
YEAH... I HAPPENED TO SEE YOU GUYS WHEN I WENT SHOPPING YESTERDAY...
OH.. UH...
BUT WE WEREN'T DOING ANYTHING WEIRD...
YEAH, I KNOW.

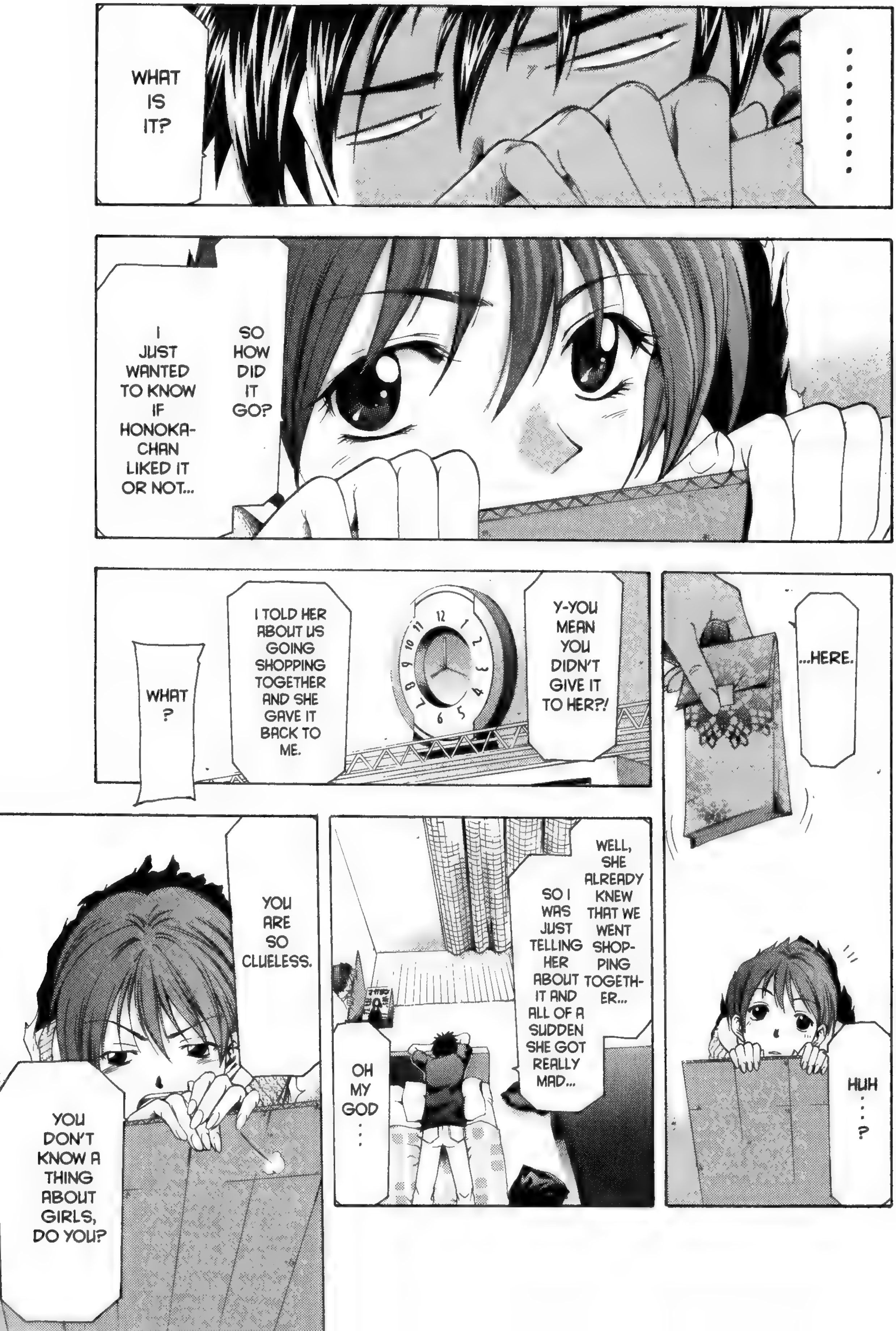

WHAT...
YOU WERE JUST TRYING TO PICK OUT SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL FOR ME, RIGHT?
I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CHOOSE A GOOD PRESENT ON MY OWN, SO...
Y-YEAH!! EXACTLY.
WELL THEN IT...
... DOESN'T REALLY BOTHER ME.
O-OKAY!
HEH, I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE JUST TOLD HER THE TRUTH TO BEGIN WITH.
H-HEY, WHY DON'T YOU OPEN IT?!
OKAY!
BOY, GOING SHOPPING WITH ASAHINA WAS SUCH A DRAG!
HUH...?

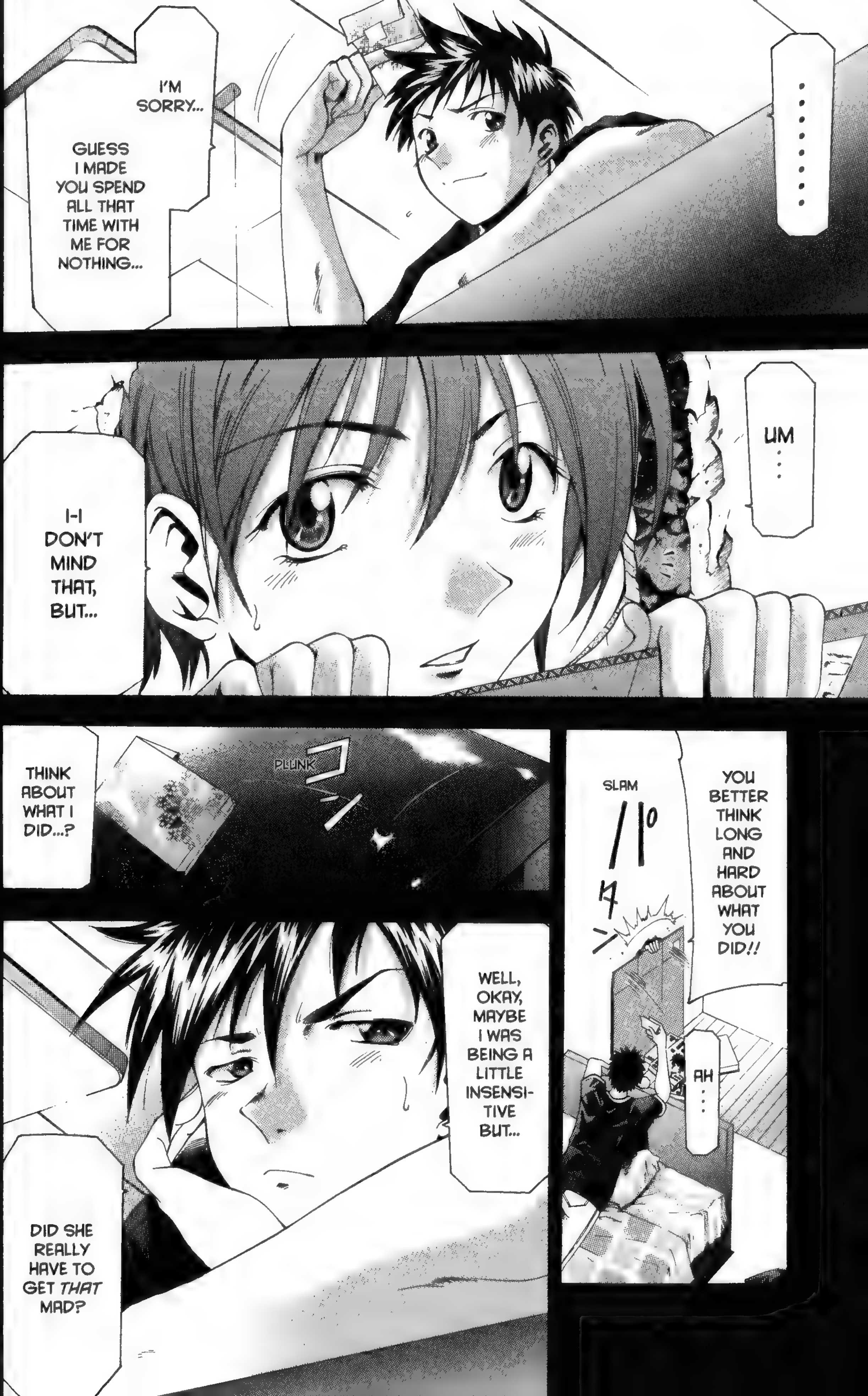

SHE TOOK ME AROUND EVERYWHERE, SAYING "HOW ABOUT THIS ONE. HOW ABOUT THAT ONE."
WE WALKED ALL THE WAY TO SHIBUYA AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW IT WAS ALREADY GETTING DARK.
......
OH... REALLY . .
YEAH, AND I WAS SO HUNGRY AND TIRED.
AND ASAHINA GOT ALL GRUMPY...
AND AFTER ALL THAT, I FOUND THE BEST GIFT ALL ON MY OWN.
I SHOULD'VE JUST GONE BY MYSELF!
......
WHY...
...DO YOU ALWAYS LOOK SO HAPPY WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT HER...?


HE NEVER LOOKS THAT HAPPY WHEN HE'S WITH ME.
THAT ALWAYS HAPPENS WHEN I GO OUT SHOPPING WITH HER.
THAT'S ENOUGH ALREADY...
...WHAT?
I DON'T...
...
W-WHAT? DID I SAY SOMETHING BAD ...?
I SAID THAT'S ENOUGH!
...WANNA HEAR ANYMORE...
....


HERE...
YOU CAN HAVE THIS BACK...
WHAT?
TAPPA
タッ
TAPPA
AH! HONOKA-CHAN!!
ガラガラ
SLIDE
ピシャッ
SLAM
ザァァァァ
TSSSSWAAAA

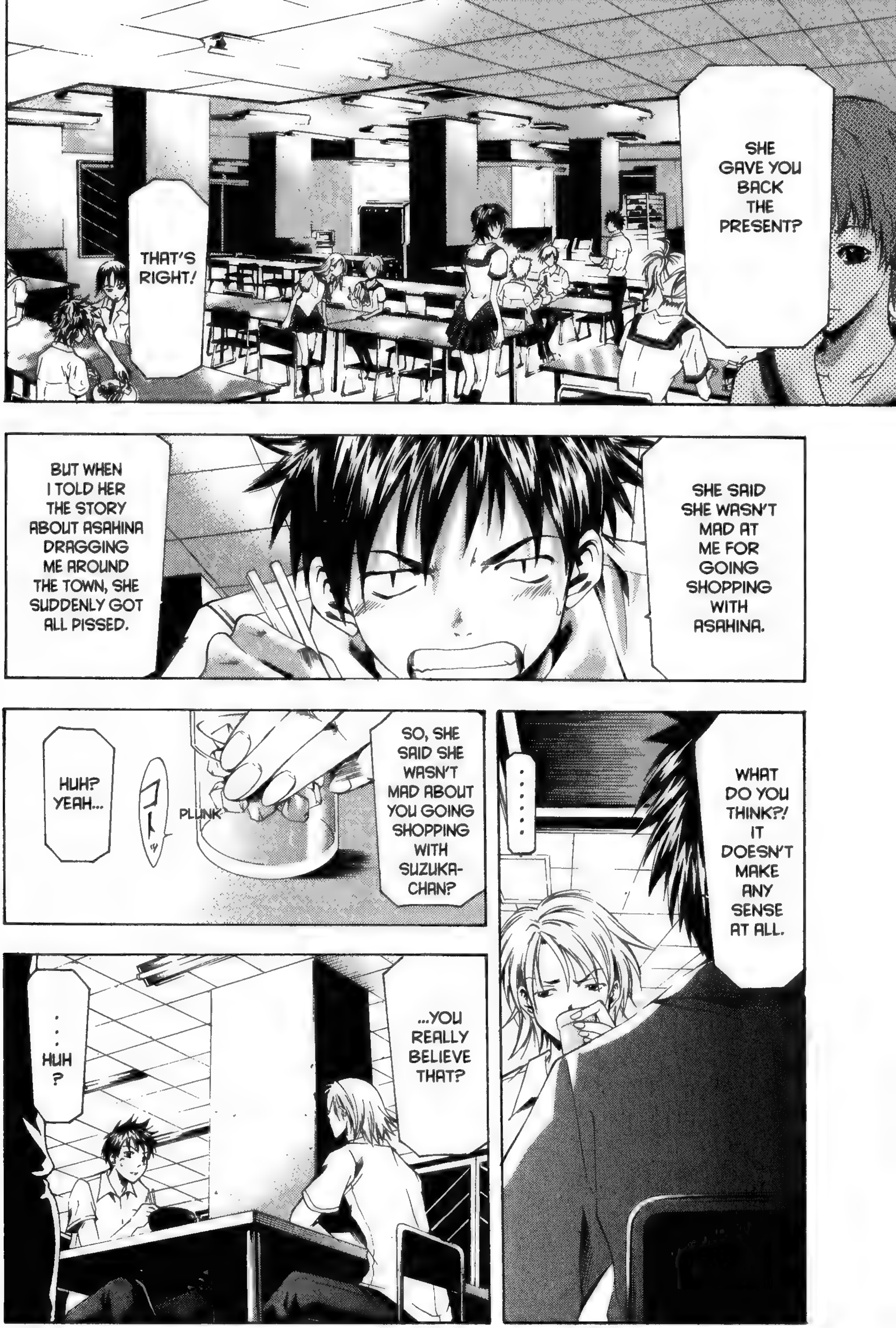

AKITSUKI-KUN, YOU BIG JERK...!
I DON'T WANNA HEAR . .
...YOUR STUPID STORY...
'MY RECIPES'
加湯
....
I AM SUCH AN ASS-HOLE...
I DID IT AGAIN...
KNOCK
ゴン
KNOCK
ゴン
. . . HUH?

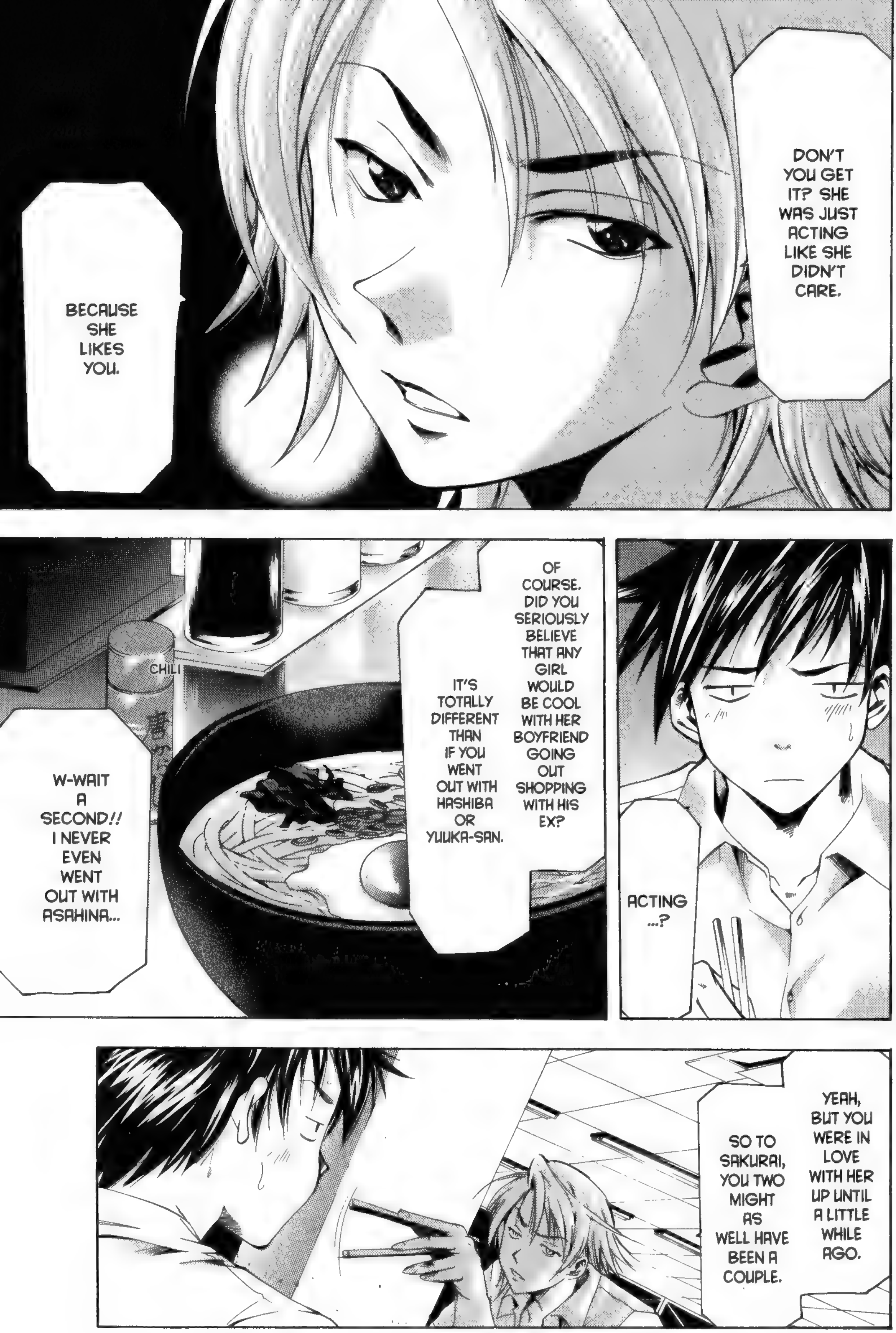

....
WHAT IS IT?
SO HOW DID IT GO?
I JUST WANTED TO KNOW IF HONOKA-CHAN LIKED IT OR NOT...
...HERE.
Y-YOU MEAN YOU DIDN'T GIVE IT TO HER?!
I TOLD HER ABOUT US GOING SHOPPING TOGETHER AND SHE GAVE IT BACK TO ME.
WHAT?
HUH...?
WELL, SHE ALREADY KNEW THAT WE WENT SHOPPING TOGETHER...
SO I WAS JUST TELLING HER ABOUT IT AND ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE GOT REALLY MAD...
OH MY GOD...
YOU ARE SO CLUELESS.
YOU DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT GIRLS, DO YOU?

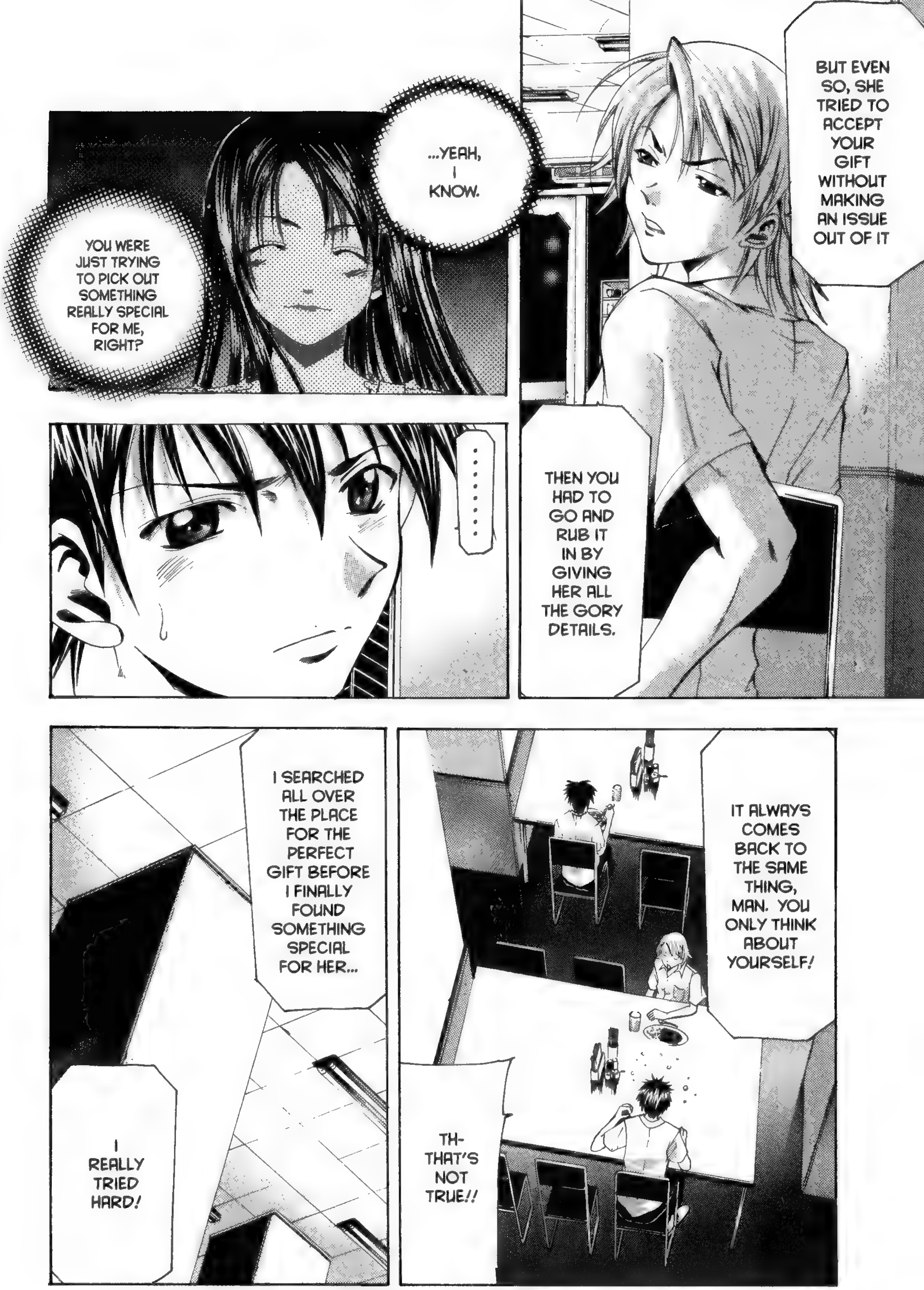

....
I'M SORRY...
GUESS I MADE YOU SPEND ALL THAT TIME WITH ME FOR NOTHING...
UM...
I-I DON'T MIND THAT, BUT...
YOU BETTER THINK LONG AND HARD ABOUT WHAT YOU DID!!
SLAM
AH...
PLUNK
THINK ABOUT WHAT I DID...?
WELL, OKAY, MAYBE I WAS BEING A LITTLE INSENSITIVE BUT...
DID SHE REALLY HAVE TO GET *THAT* MAD?

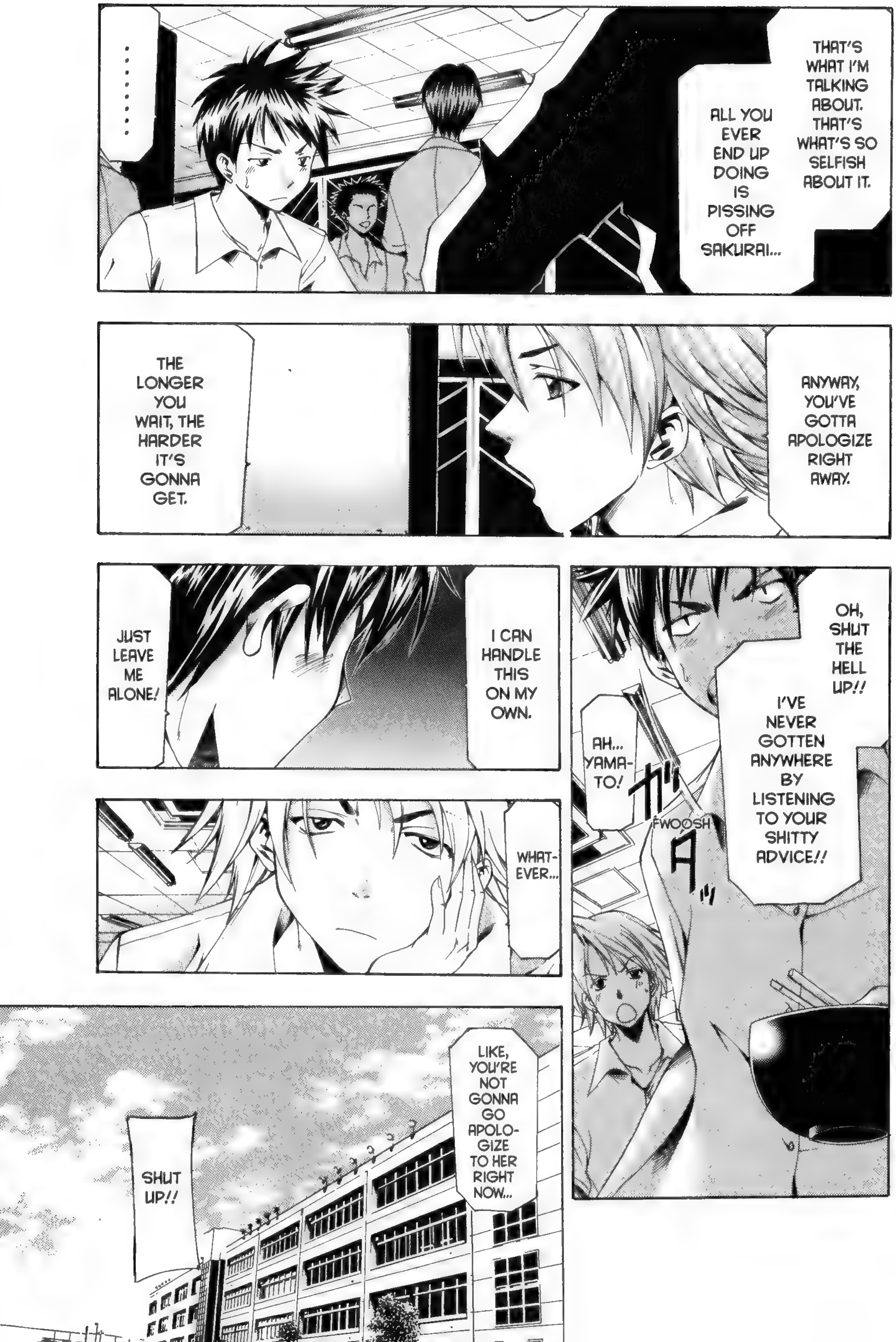
#51 IGNORED

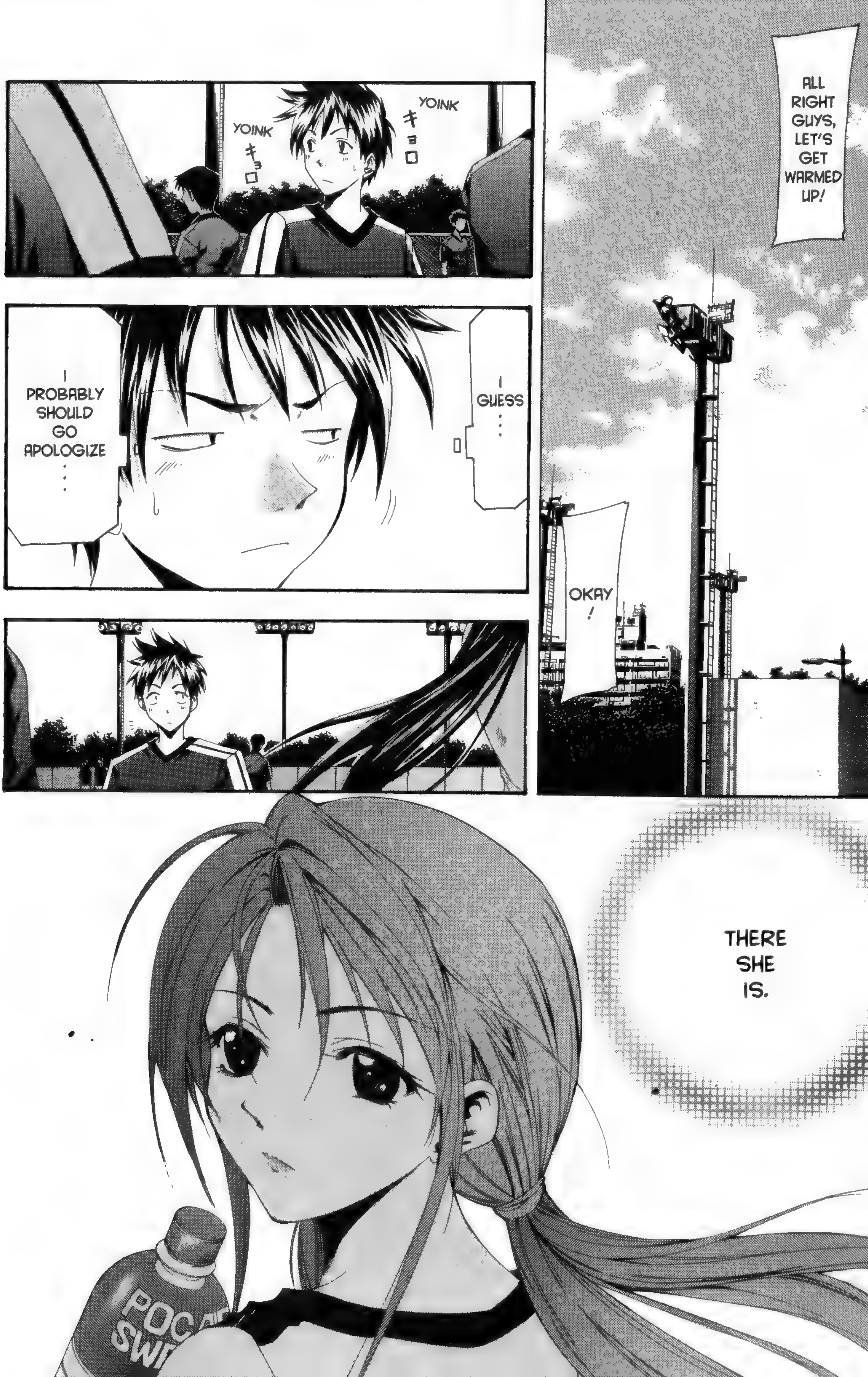
SUZUKA

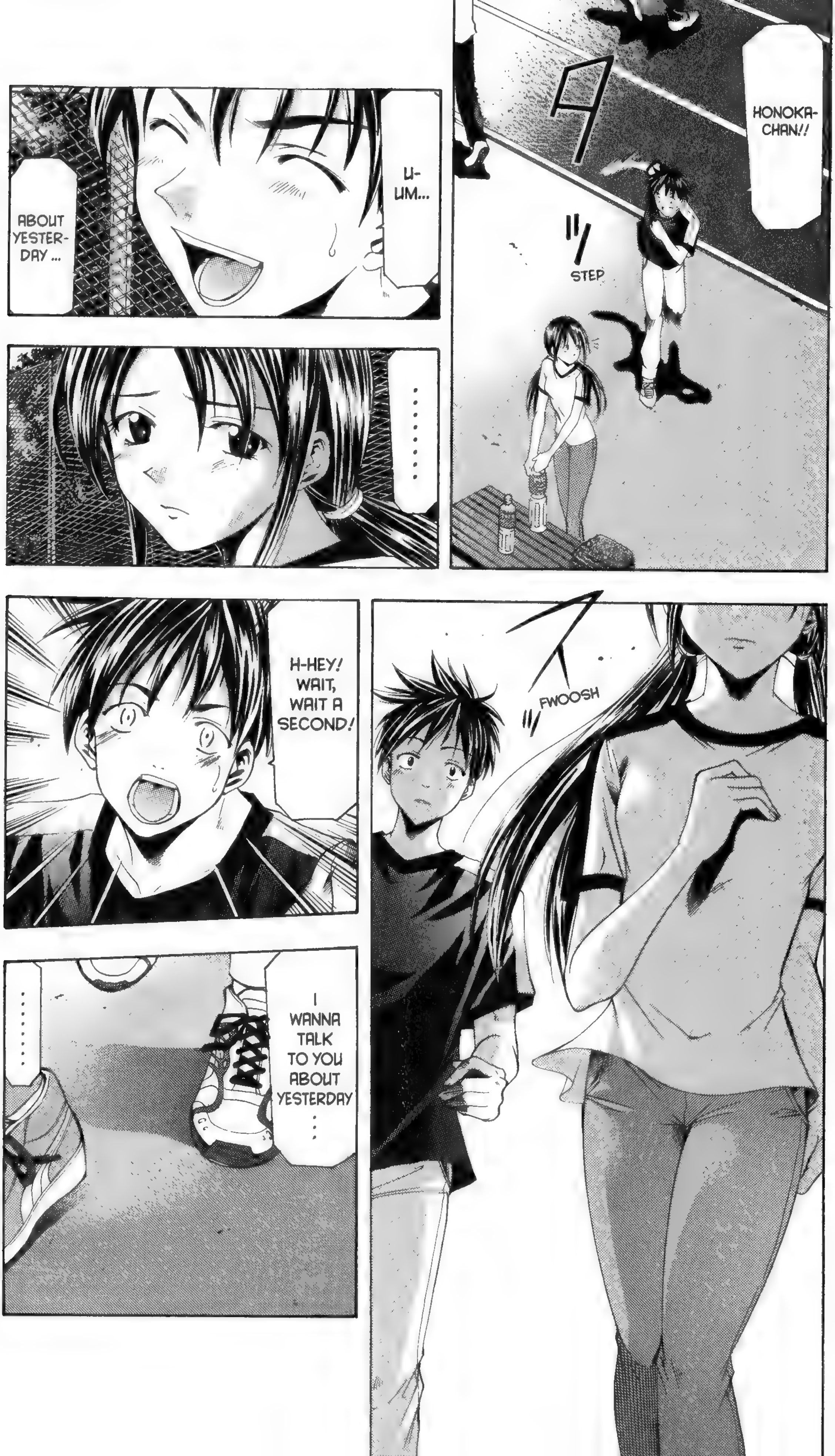

SHE GAVE YOU BACK THE PRESENT?
THAT'S RIGHT!
SHE SAID SHE WASN'T MAD AT ME FOR GOING SHOPPING WITH ASAHINA.
BUT WHEN I TOLD HER THE STORY ABOUT ASAHINA DRAGGING ME AROUND THE TOWN, SHE SUDDENLY GOT ALL PISSED.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?! IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE AT ALL.
......
SO, SHE SAID SHE WASN'T MAD ABOUT YOU GOING SHOPPING WITH SUZUKA-CHAN?
コトッ
PLUNK
HUH? YEAH...
...YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?
...HUH?

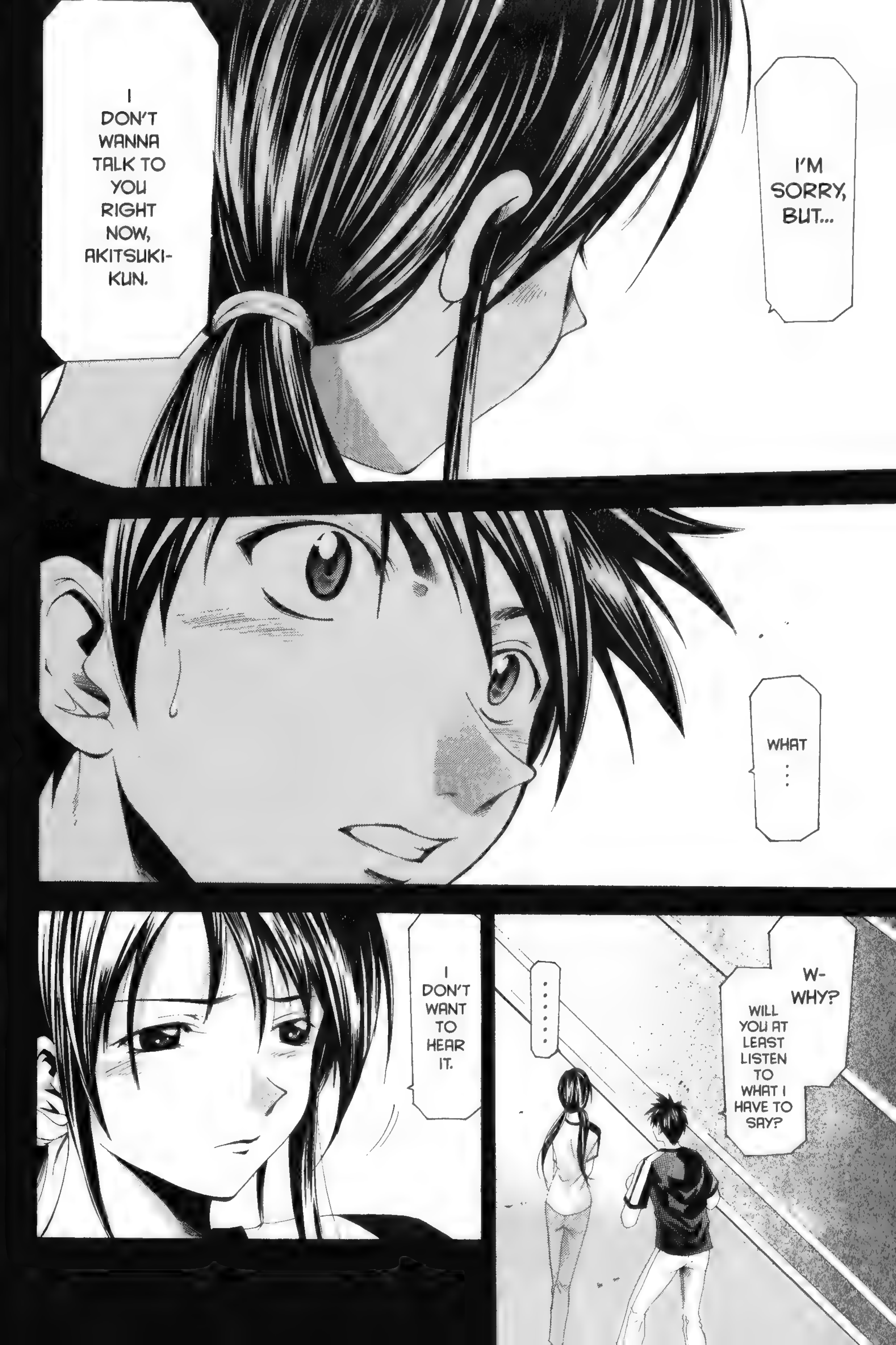

DON'T YOU GET IT? SHE WAS JUST ACTING LIKE SHE DIDN'T CARE.
BECAUSE SHE LIKES YOU.
ACTING ...?
OF COURSE. DID YOU SERIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT ANY GIRL WOULD BE COOL WITH HER BOYFRIEND GOING OUT SHOPPING WITH HIS EX?
IT'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT THAN IF YOU WENT OUT WITH HASHIBA OR YUUKA-SAN.
CHILI
W-WAIT A SECOND!! I NEVER EVEN WENT OUT WITH ASAHINA...
YEAH, BUT YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH HER UP UNTIL A LITTLE WHILE AGO.
SO TO SAKURAI, YOU TWO MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN A COUPLE.

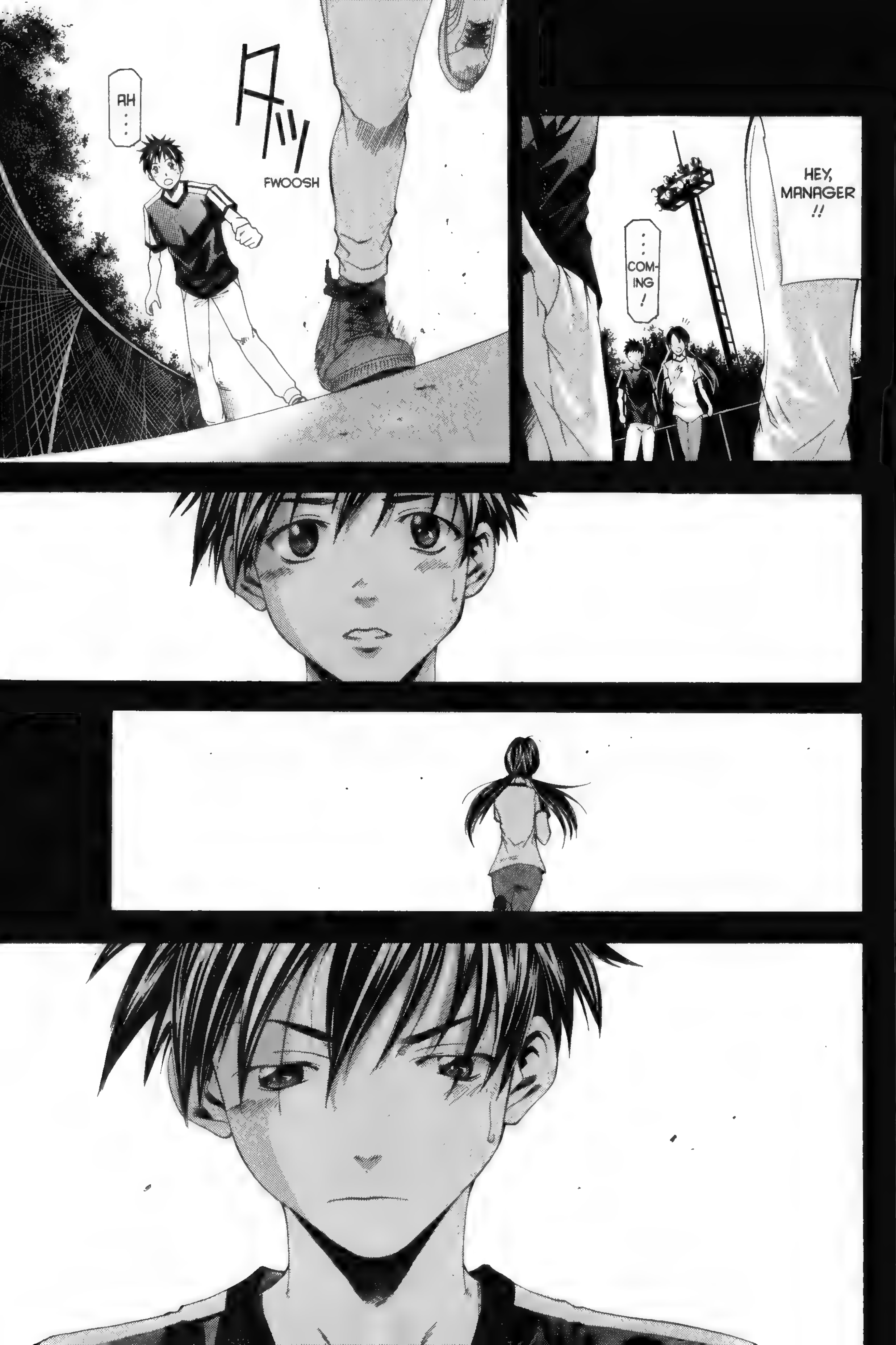

BUT EVEN SO, SHE TRIED TO ACCEPT YOUR GIFT WITHOUT MAKING AN ISSUE OUT OF IT
THEN YOU HAD TO GO AND RUB IT IN BY GIVING HER ALL THE GORY DETAILS.
...YEAH, I KNOW.
YOU WERE JUST TRYING TO PICK OUT SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL FOR ME, RIGHT?
....
IT ALWAYS COMES BACK TO THE SAME THING, MAN. YOU ONLY THINK ABOUT YOURSELF!
TH-THAT'S NOT TRUE!!
I SEARCHED ALL OVER THE PLACE FOR THE PERFECT GIFT BEFORE I FINALLY FOUND SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR HER...
I REALLY TRIED HARD!

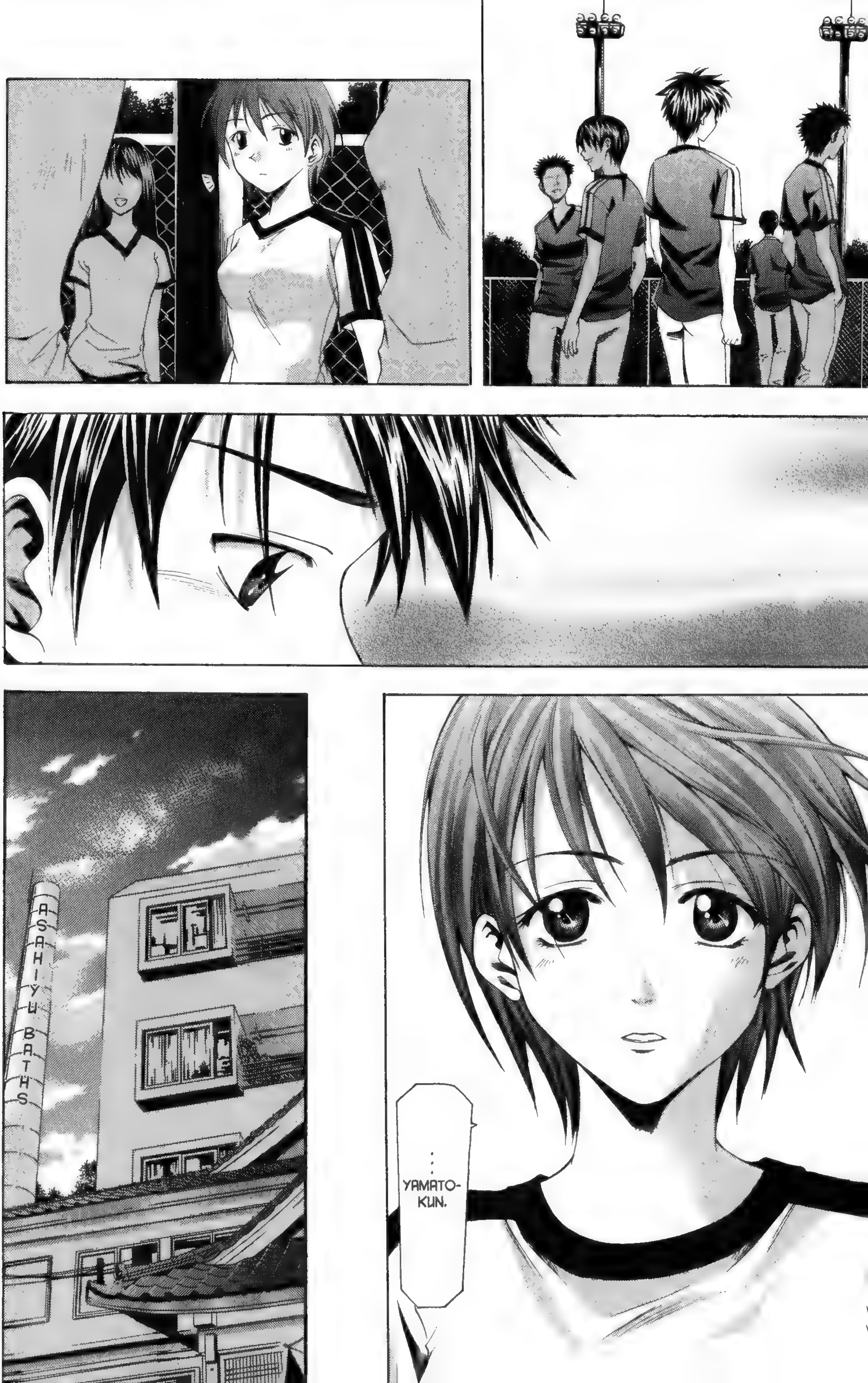

THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. THAT'S WHAT'S SO SELFISH ABOUT IT.
ALL YOU EVER END UP DOING IS PISSING OFF SAKURAI...
......
ANYWAY, YOU'VE GOTTA APOLOGIZE RIGHT AWAY.
THE LONGER YOU WAIT, THE HARDER IT'S GONNA GET.
OH, SHUT THE HELL UP!!
I'VE NEVER GOTTEN ANYWHERE BY LISTENING TO YOUR SHITTY ADVICE!!
FWOOSH
AH... YAMATO!
I CAN HANDLE THIS ON MY OWN.
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
WHATEVER...
LIKE, YOU'RE NOT GONNA GO APOLOGIZE TO HER RIGHT NOW...
SHUT UP!!

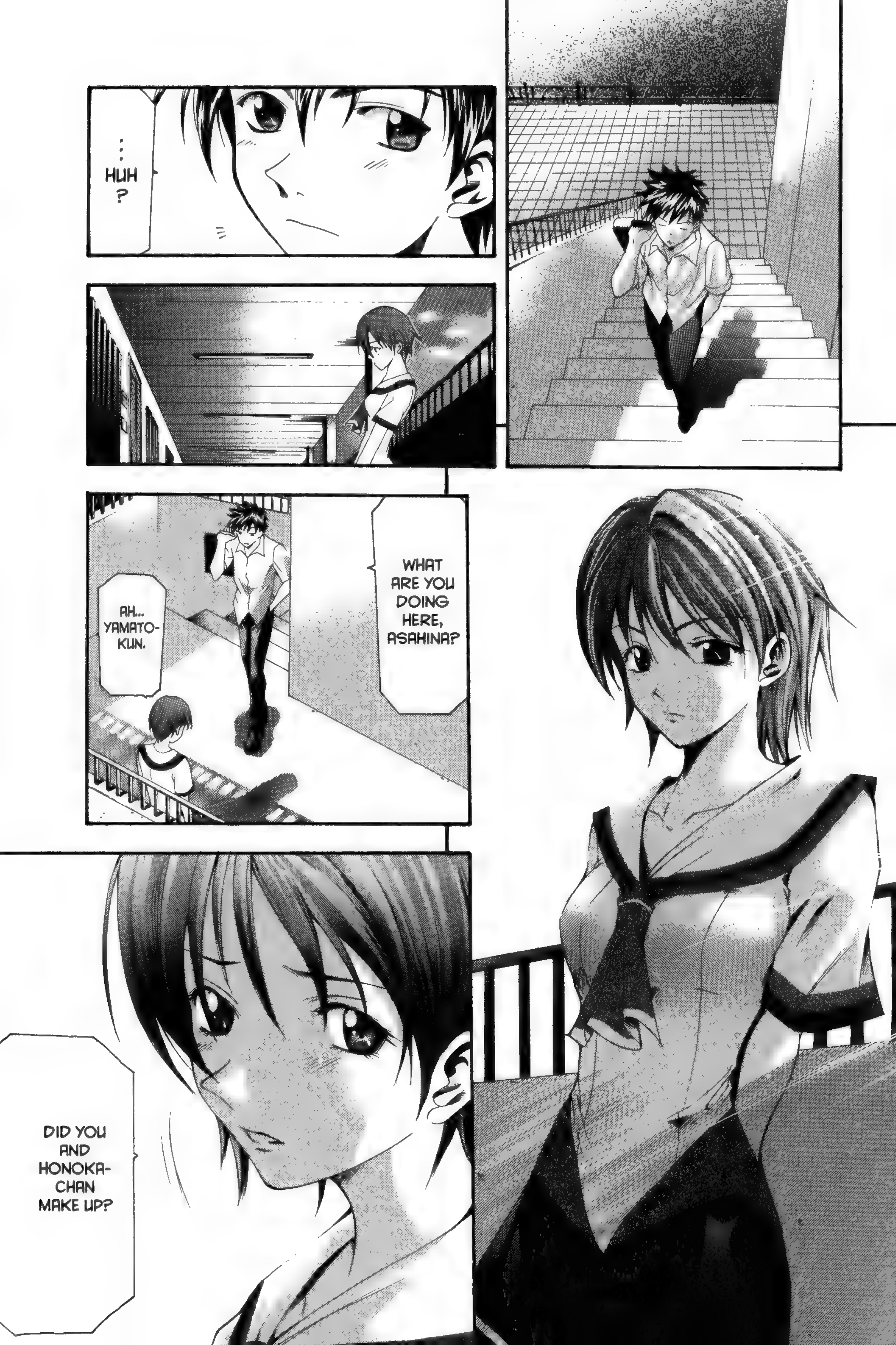

ALL RIGHT GUYS, LET'S GET WARMED UP!
OKAY!
YOINK キョロ
YOINK キョロ
I GUESS...
I PROBABLY SHOULD GO APOLOGIZE...
THERE SHE IS.
..

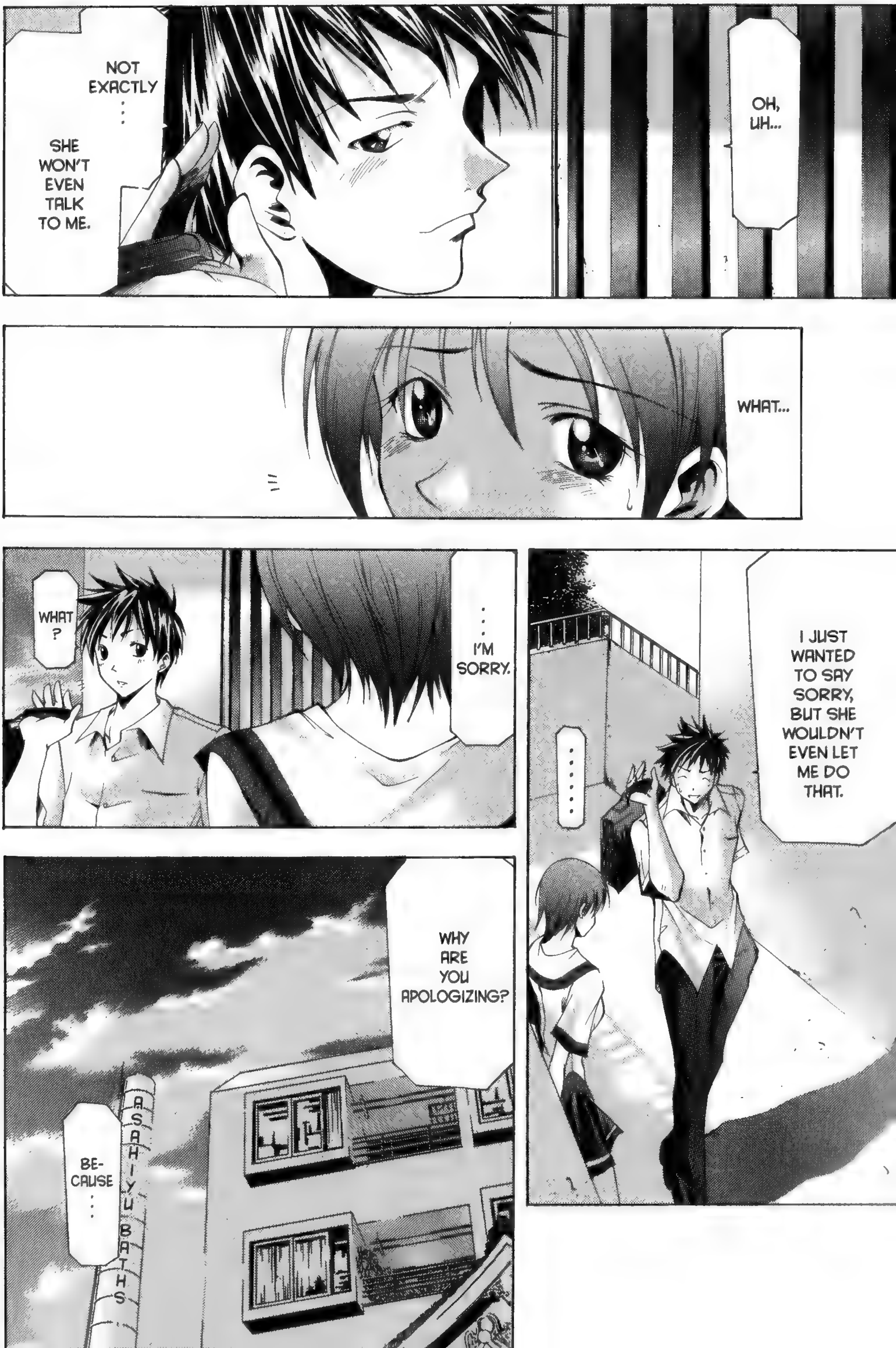

HONOKA-CHAN!!
STEP
U-UM...
ABOUT YESTERDAY ...
....
FWOOSH
H-HEY! WAIT, WAIT A SECOND!
I WANNA TALK TO YOU ABOUT YESTERDAY ...
....

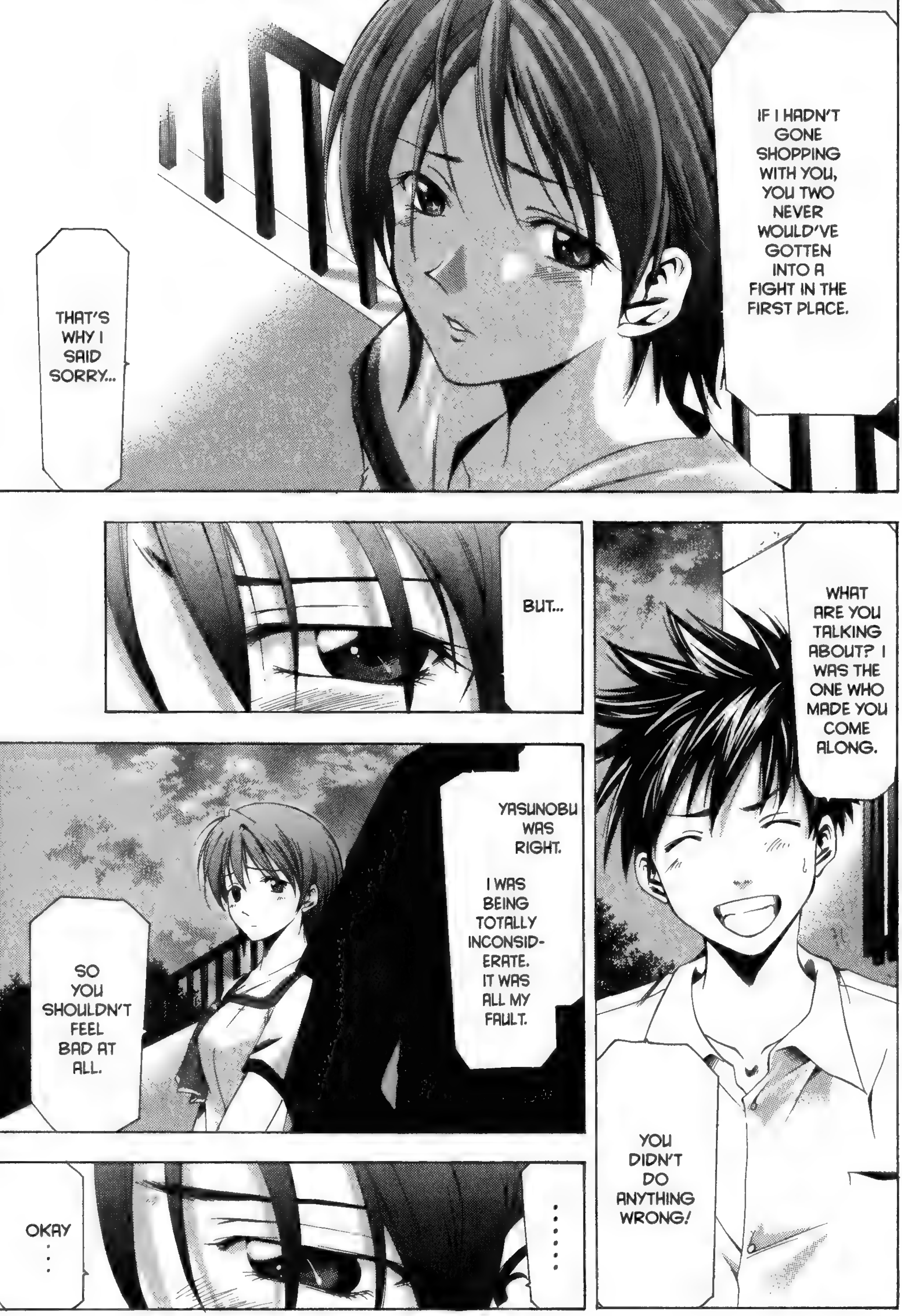

I'M SORRY, BUT...
I DON'T WANNA TALK TO YOU RIGHT NOW, AKITSUKI-KUN.
WHAT ...
W- WHY?
WILL YOU AT LEAST LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY?
....
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT.

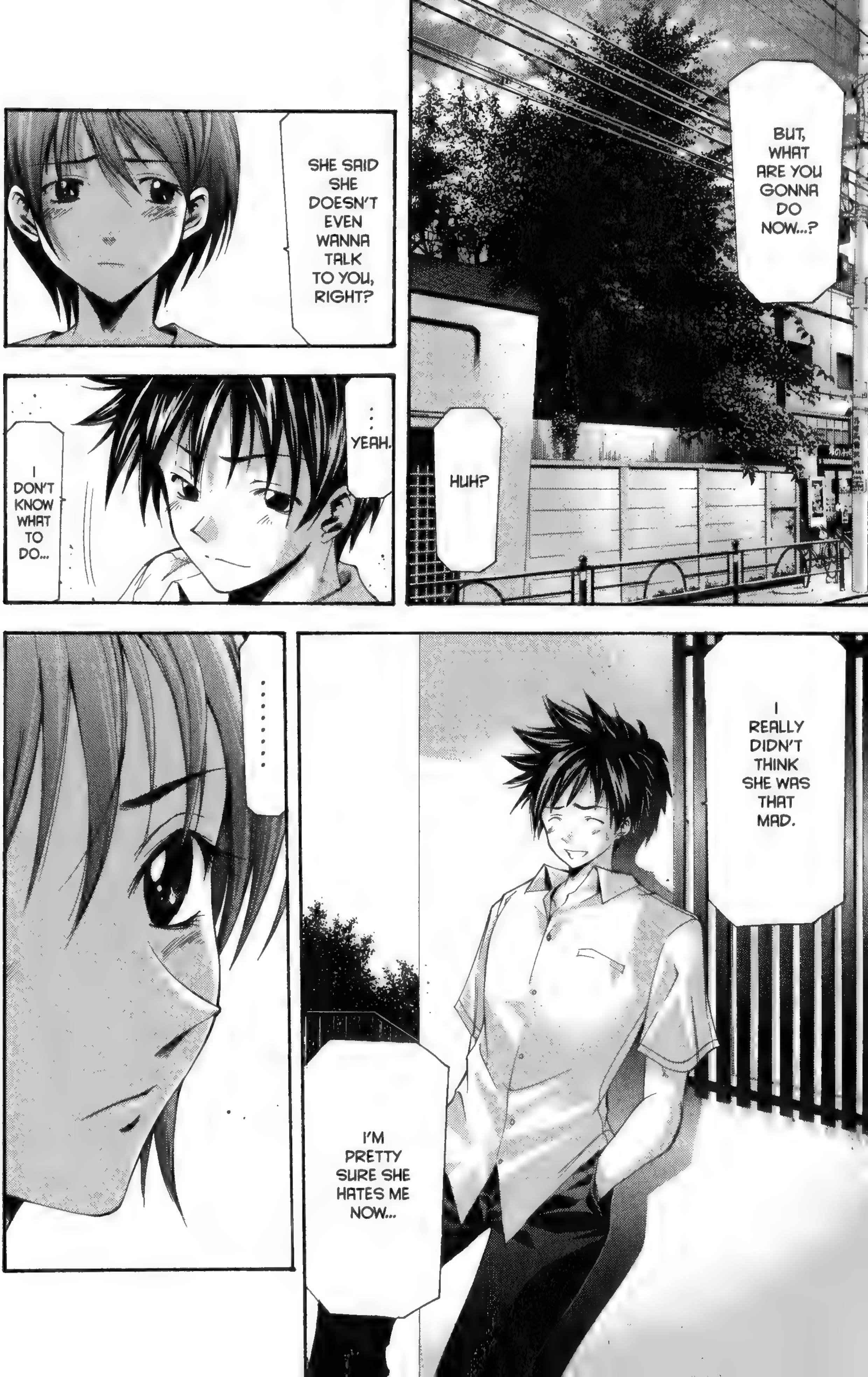

HEY, MANAGER!!
...COMING!
AH...
タッ
FWOOSH

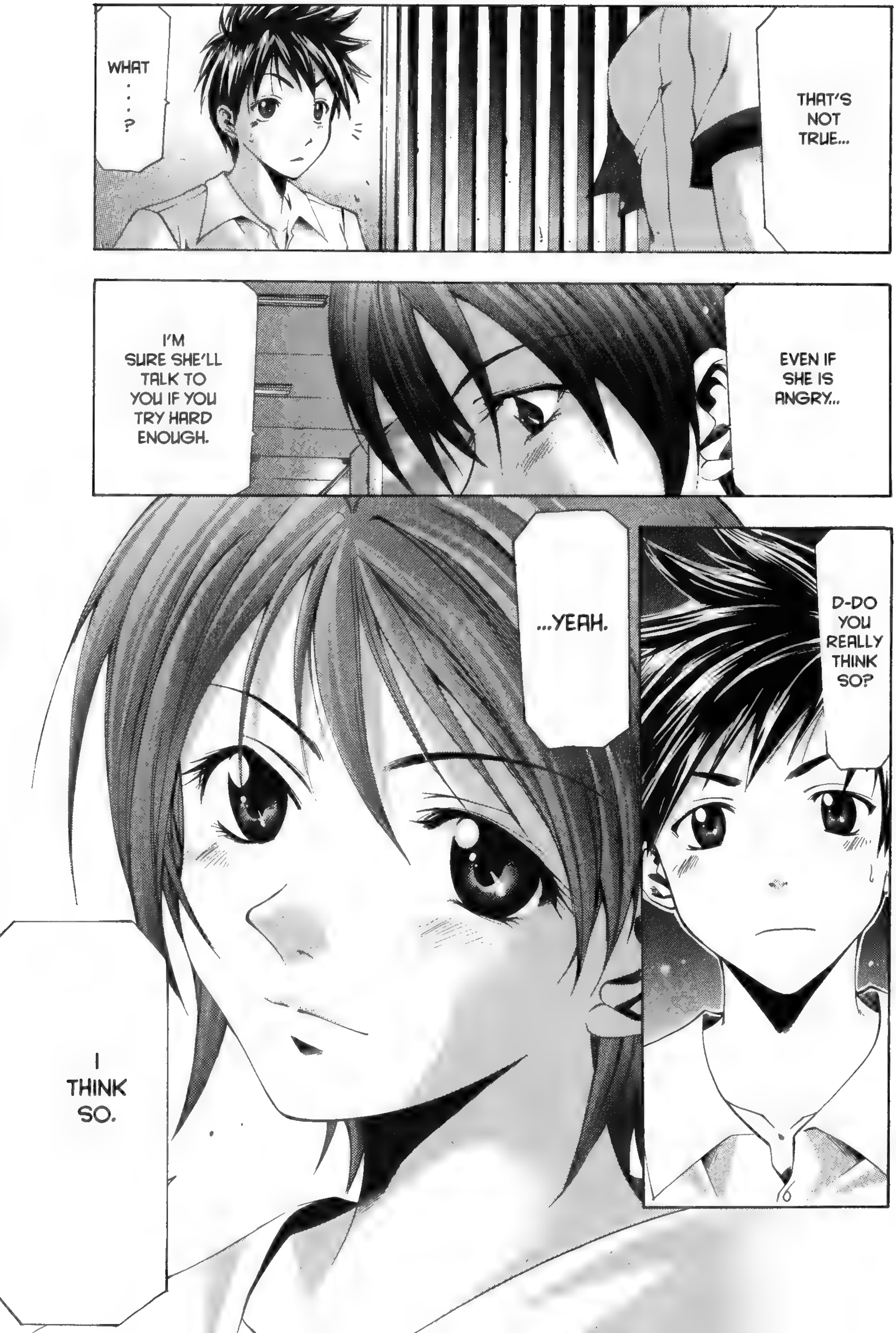

……YAMATO-KUN.
ASAHI-YU BATHS

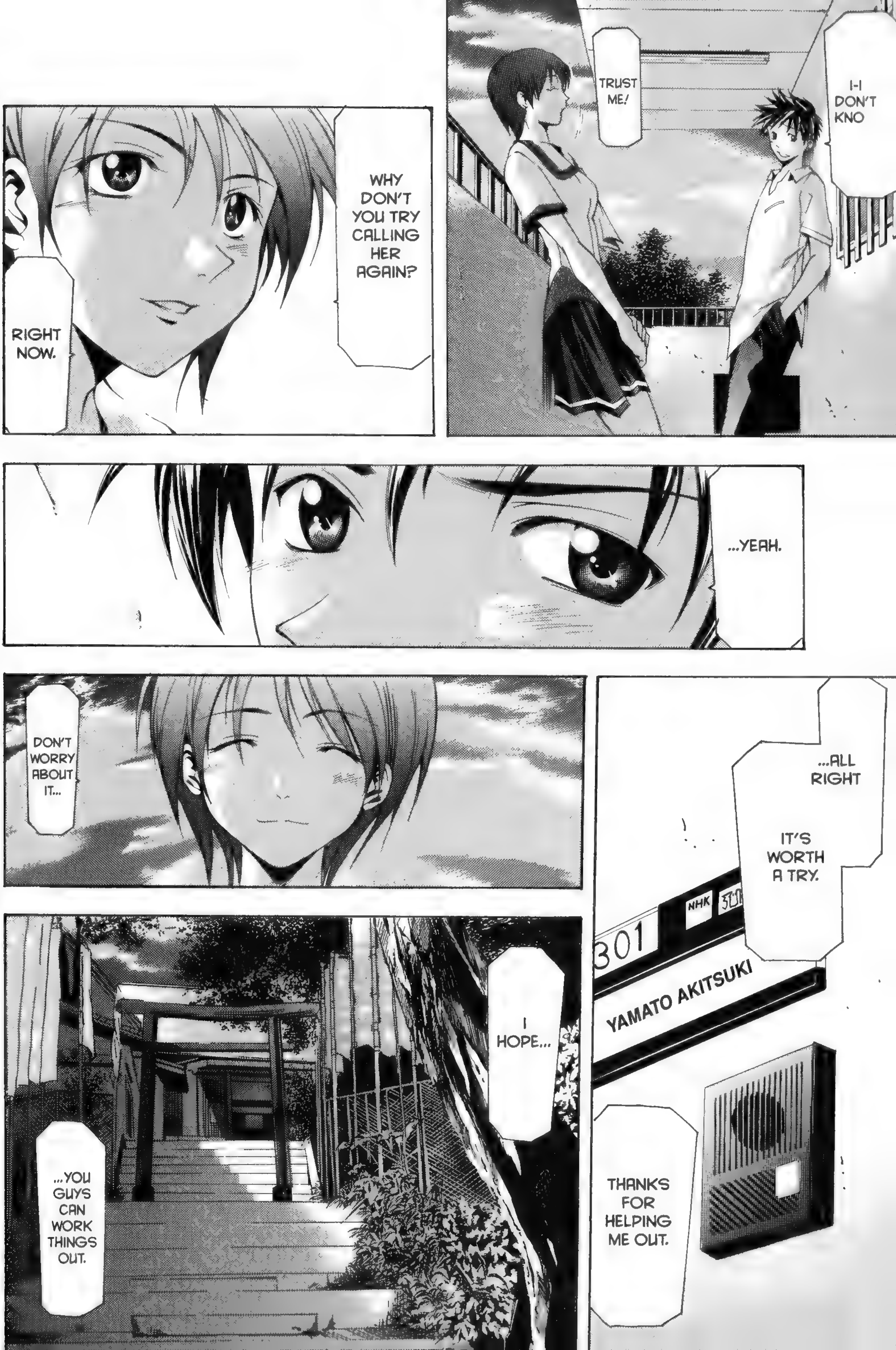

... HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ASAHINA?
AH... YAMATO-KUN.
DID YOU AND HONOKA-CHAN MAKE UP?

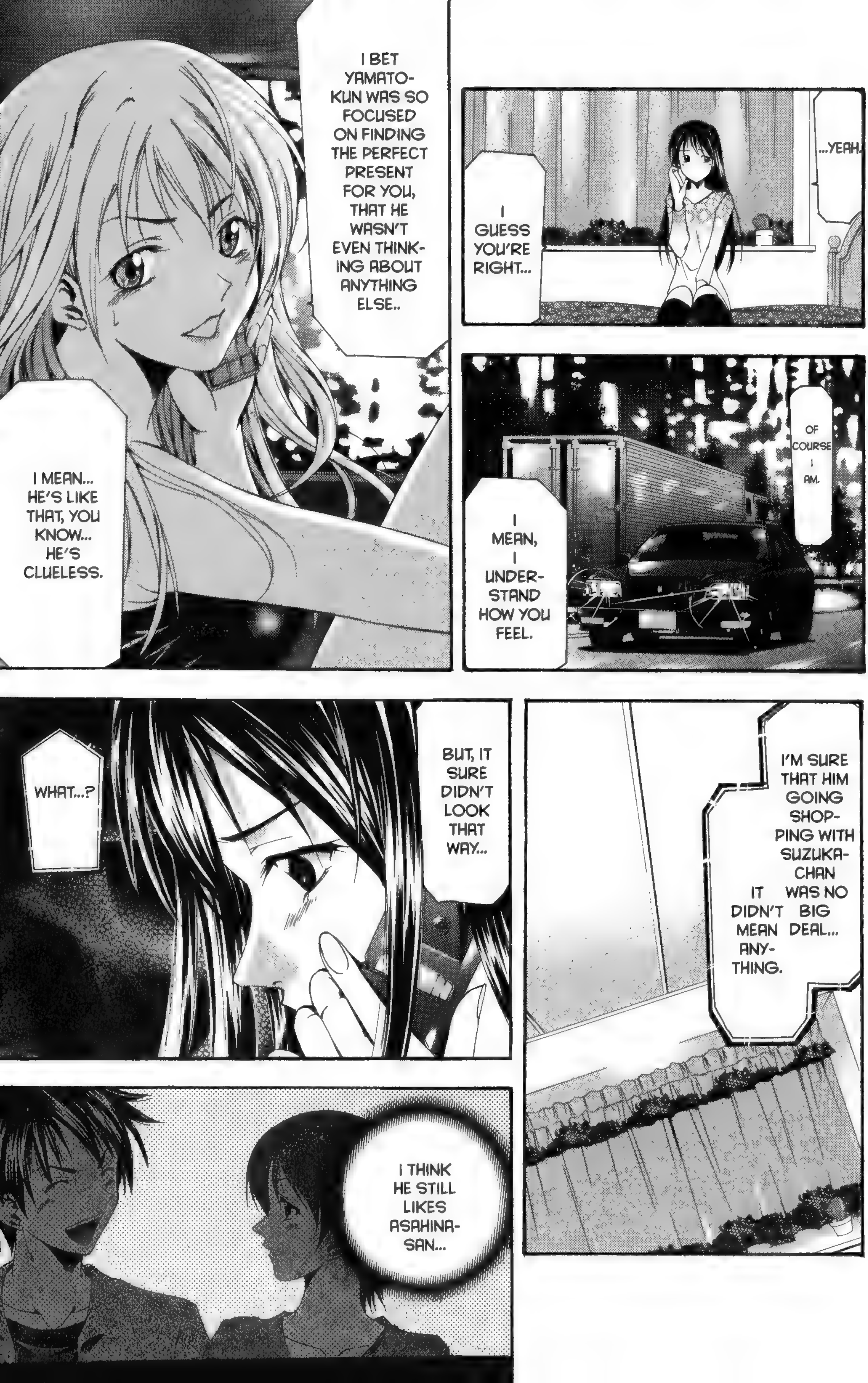

OH, UH...
NOT EXACTLY...
SHE WON'T EVEN TALK TO ME.
WHAT...
I JUST WANTED TO SAY SORRY, BUT SHE WOULDN'T EVEN LET ME DO THAT.
......
...I'M SORRY.
WHAT?
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?
BE-CAUSE...
ASAHIYU BATHS

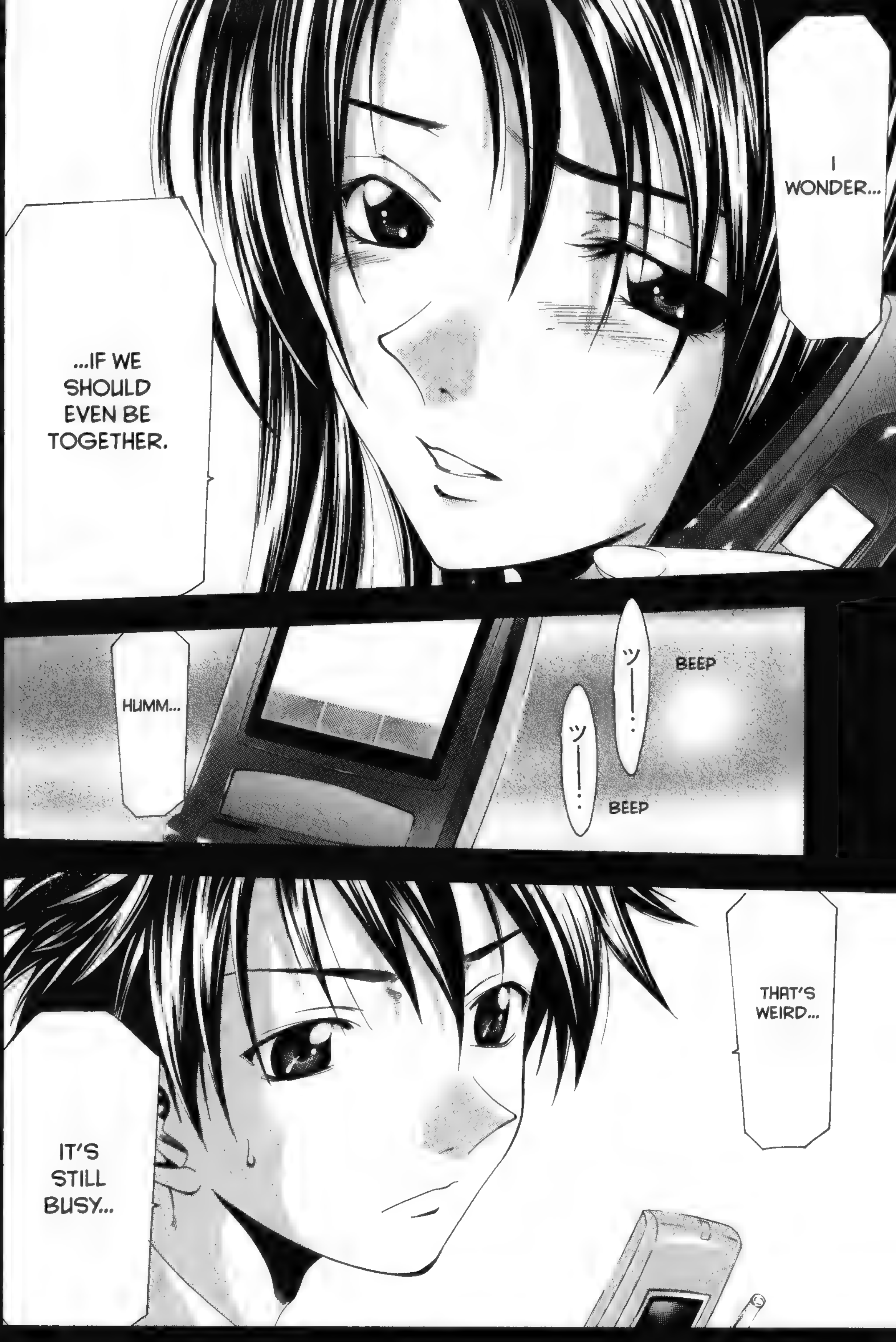

IF I HADN'T GONE SHOPPING WITH YOU, YOU TWO NEVER WOULD'VE GOTTEN INTO A FIGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
THAT'S WHY I SAID SORRY...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I WAS THE ONE WHO MADE YOU COME ALONG.
BUT...
YASUNOBU WAS RIGHT.
I WAS BEING TOTALLY INCONSIDERATE. IT WAS ALL MY FAULT.
SO YOU SHOULDN'T FEEL BAD AT ALL.
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG!
......
OKAY...

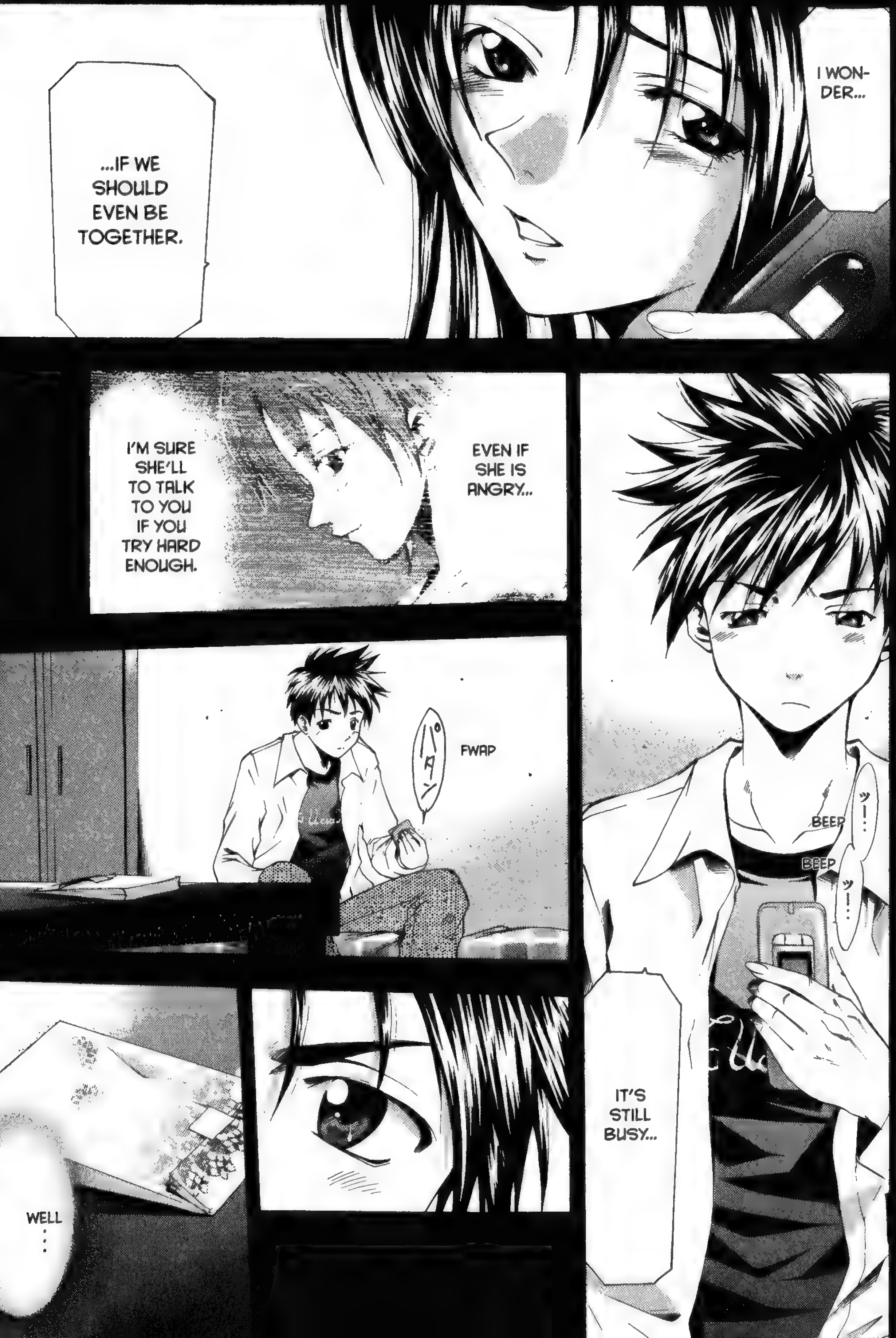

BUT, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO NOW...?
HUH?
SHE SAID SHE DOESN'T EVEN WANNA TALK TO YOU, RIGHT?
...YEAH.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
I REALLY DIDN'T THINK SHE WAS THAT MAD.
I'M PRETTY SURE SHE HATES ME NOW...
....

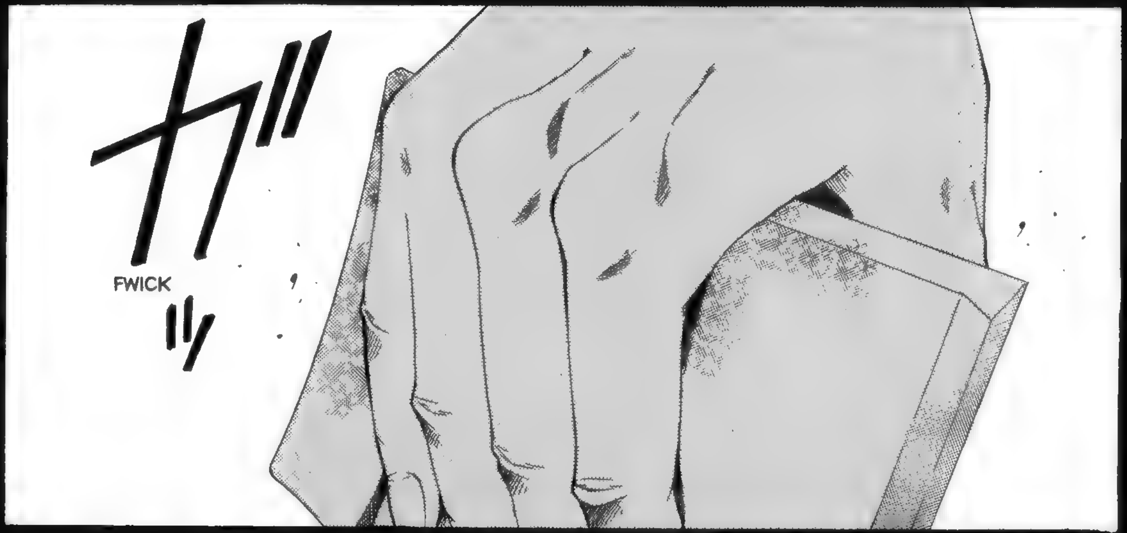

THAT'S NOT TRUE...
WHAT . . . ?
EVEN IF SHE IS ANGRY...
I'M SURE SHE'LL TALK TO YOU IF YOU TRY HARD ENOUGH.
D-DO YOU REALLY THINK SO?
...YEAH.
I THINK SO.


I-I DON'T KNO
TRUST ME!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY CALLING HER AGAIN?
RIGHT NOW.
...YEAH.
...ALL RIGHT
IT'S WORTH A TRY.
301
NHK
YAMATO AKITSUKI
THANKS FOR HELPING ME OUT.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...
I HOPE...
...YOU GUYS CAN WORK THINGS OUT.


I BET YAMATO-KUN WAS SO FOCUSED ON FINDING THE PERFECT PRESENT FOR YOU, THAT HE WASN'T EVEN THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE..
I MEAN... HE'S LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW... HE'S CLUELESS.
...YEAH.
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
OF COURSE I AM.
I MEAN, I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL.
I'M SURE THAT HIM GOING SHOPPING WITH SUZUKA-CHAN WAS NO BIG DEAL...
IT DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING.
BUT, IT SURE DIDN'T LOOK THAT WAY...
WHAT...?
I THINK HE STILL LIKES ASAHINA-SAN...

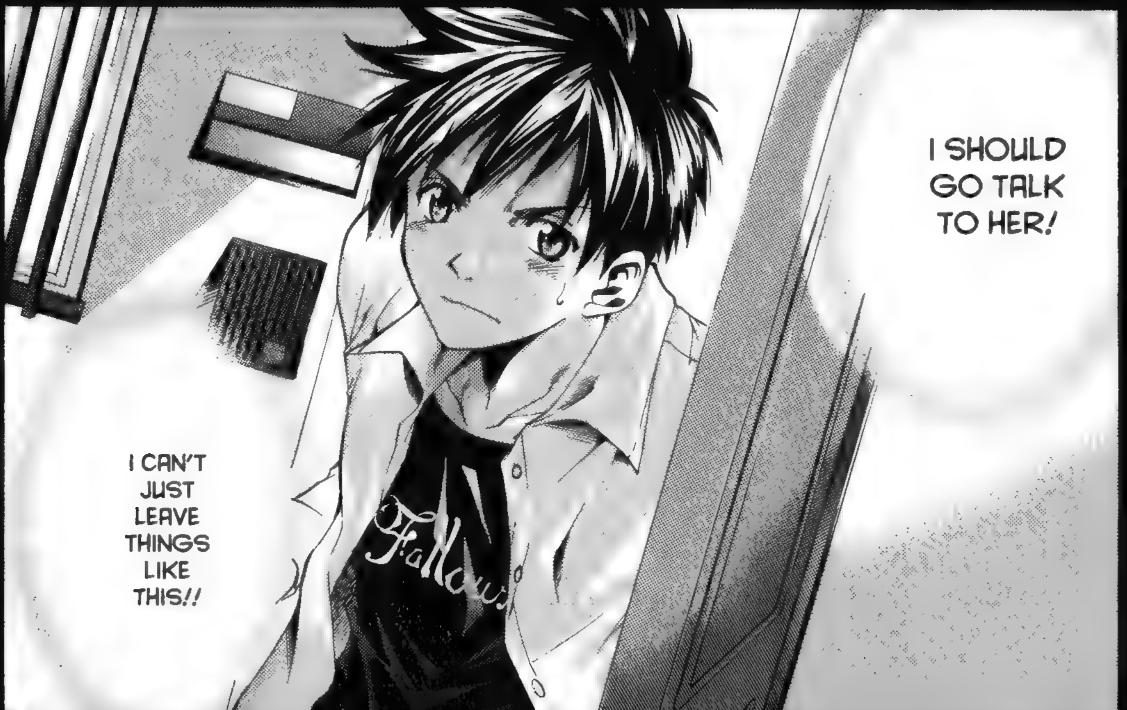

I WONDER...
...IF WE SHOULD EVEN BE TOGETHER.
ツー…！
BEEP
ツー…！
BEEP
HUMM...
THAT'S WEIRD...
IT'S STILL BUSY...

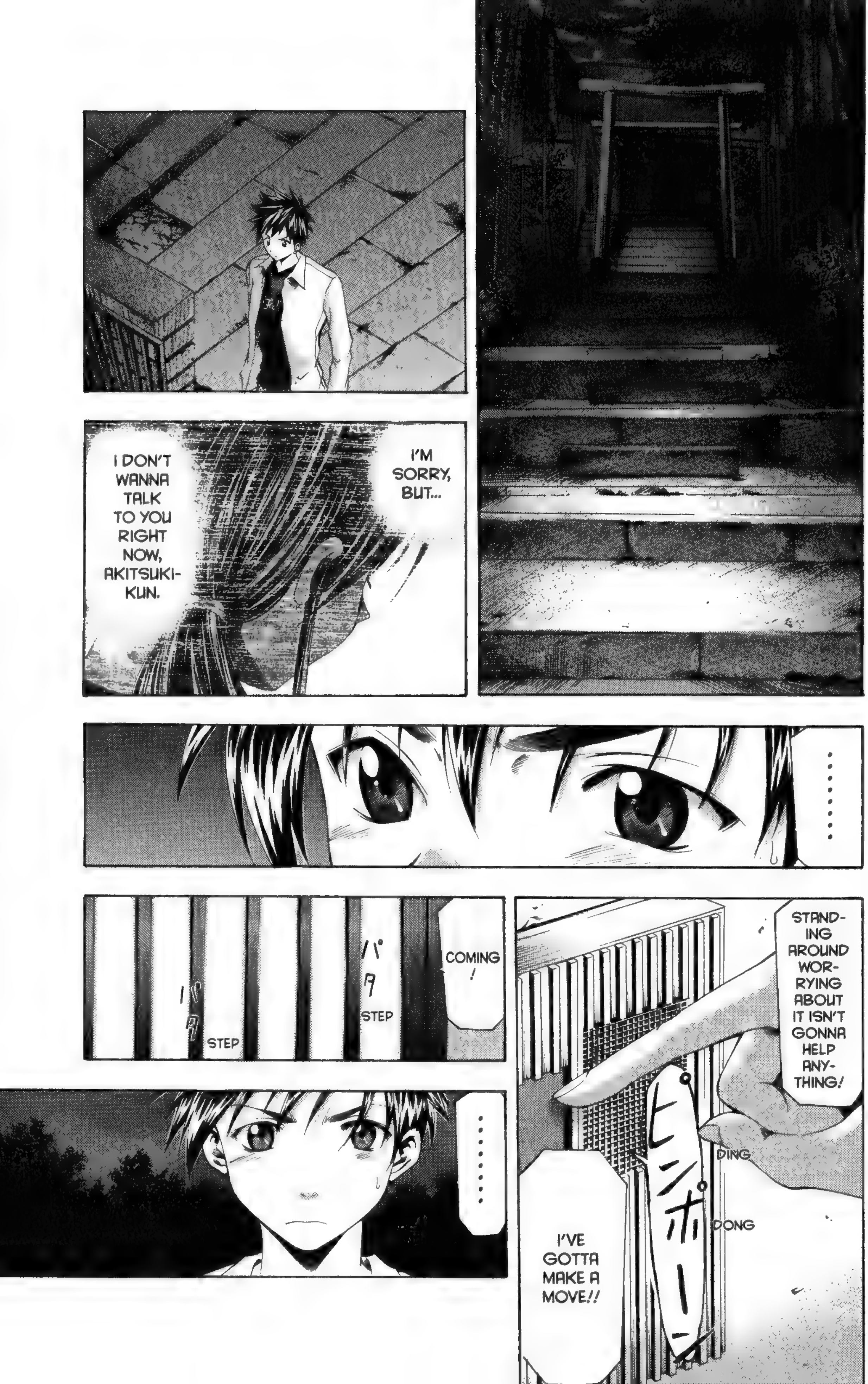

I WONDER...
...IF WE SHOULD EVEN BE TOGETHER.
EVEN IF SHE IS ANGRY...
I'M SURE SHE'LL TO TALK TO YOU IF YOU TRY HARD ENOUGH.
パタン
FWAP
ツー…
BEEP
ツー…
BEEP
IT'S STILL BUSY...
WELL...

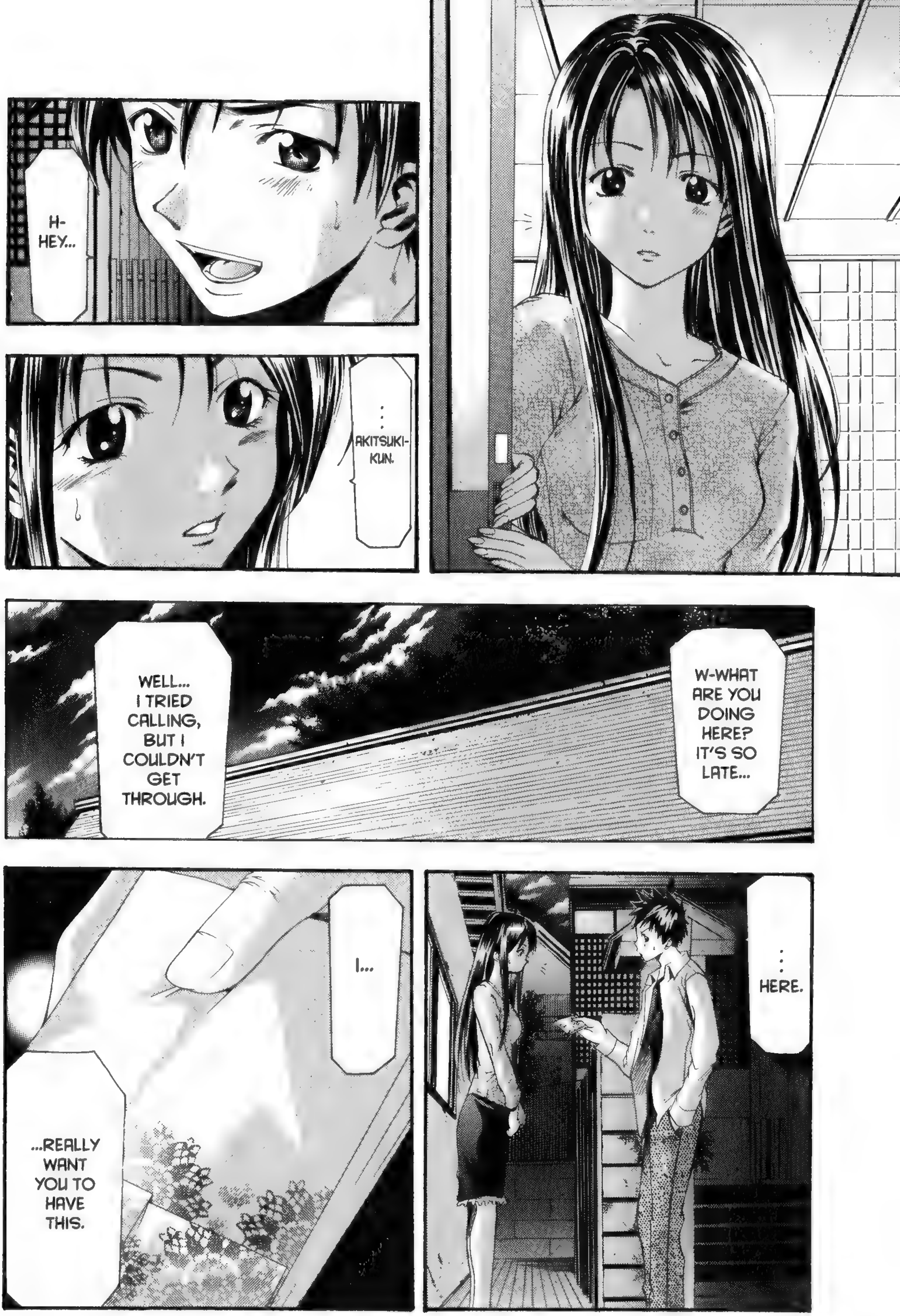


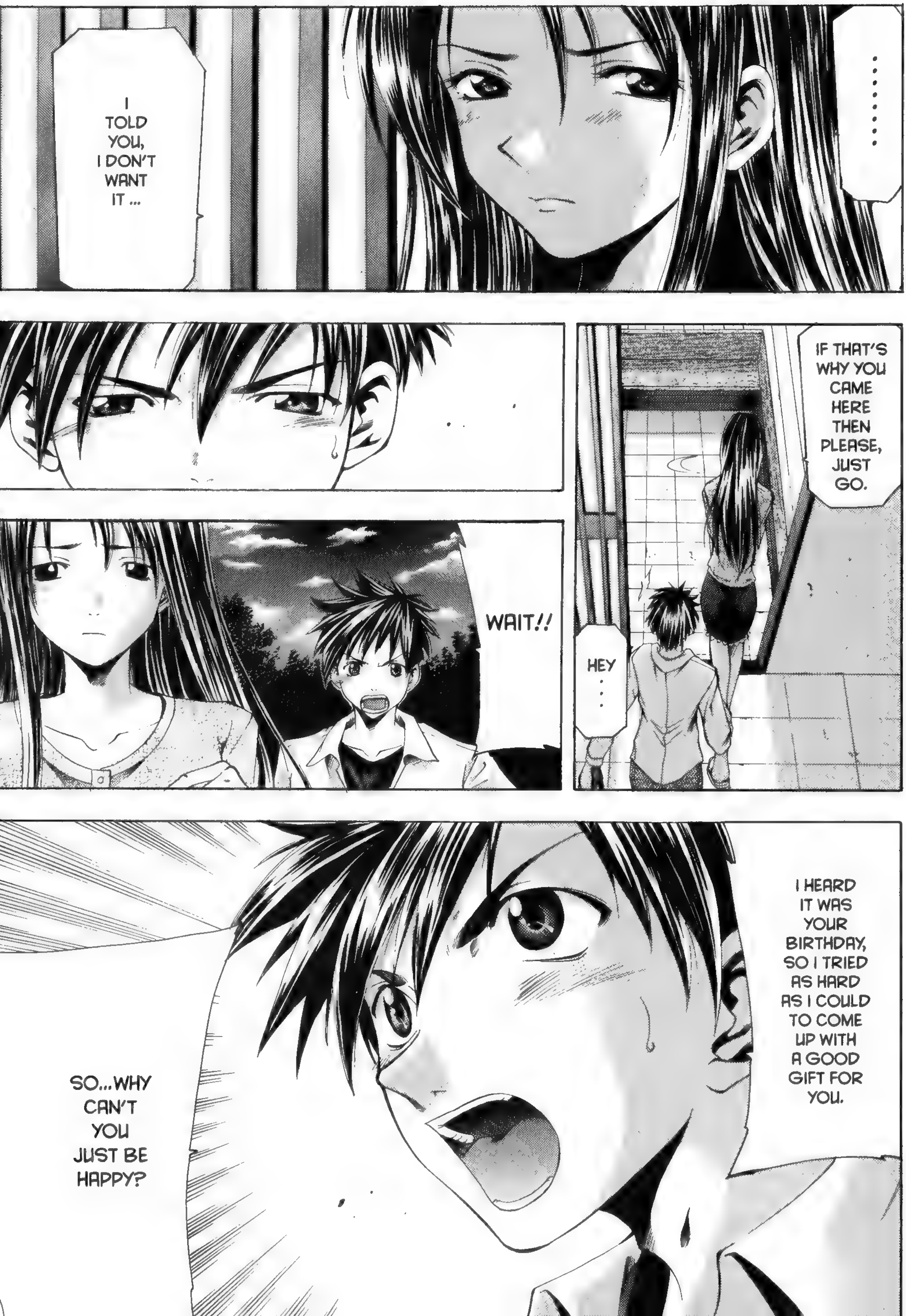
SUZUKA

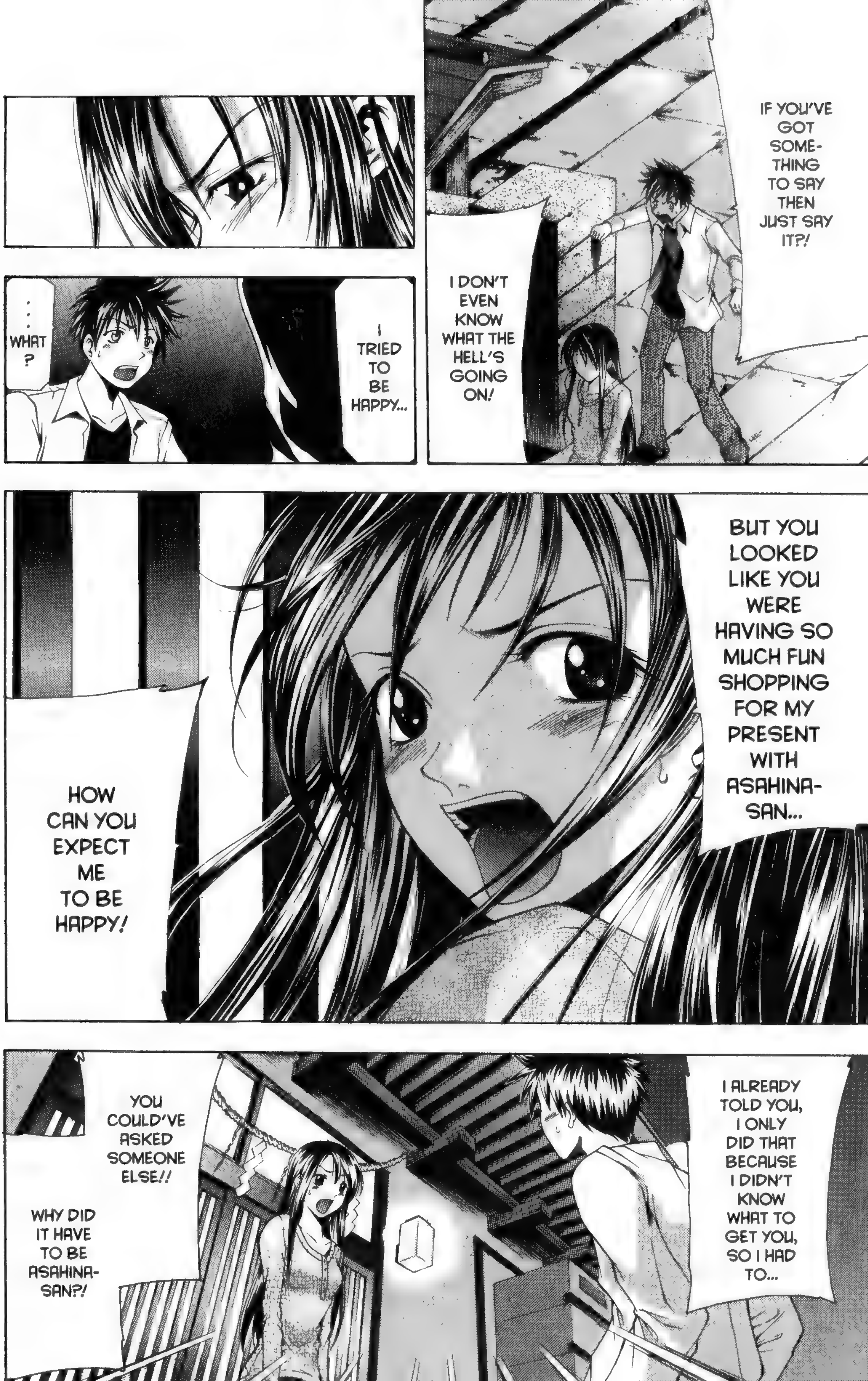
#52 PARTING

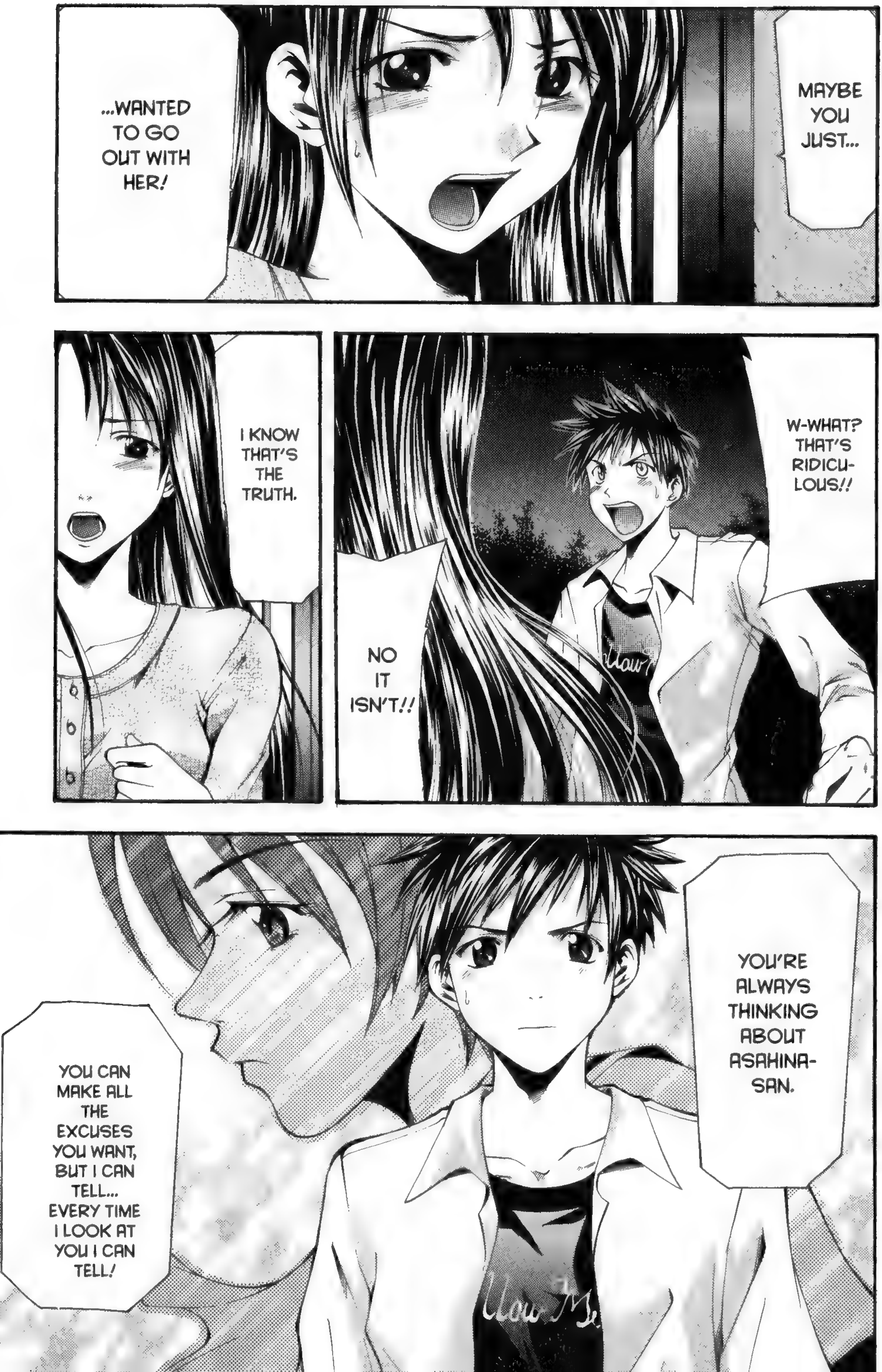

I SHOULD GO TALK TO HER!
I CAN'T JUST LEAVE THINGS LIKE THIS!!
Fallows

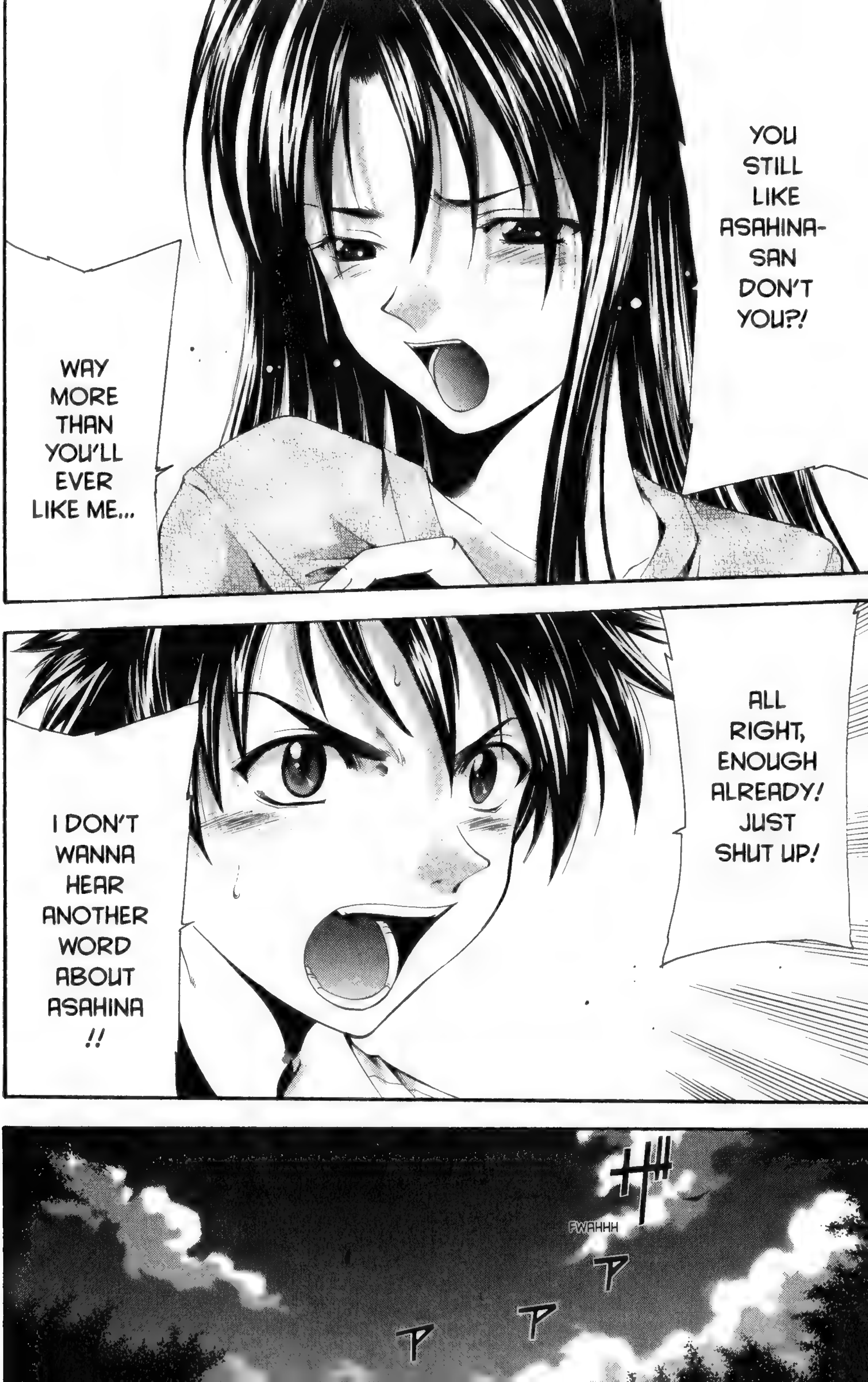

I'M SORRY, BUT...
I DON'T WANNA TALK TO YOU RIGHT NOW, AKITSUKI-KUN.
......
STANDING AROUND WORRYING ABOUT IT ISN'T GONNA HELP ANYTHING!
ピンポーン
DING
DONG
I'VE GOTTA MAKE A MOVE!!
COMING!
パタ
STEP
パタ
STEP
......

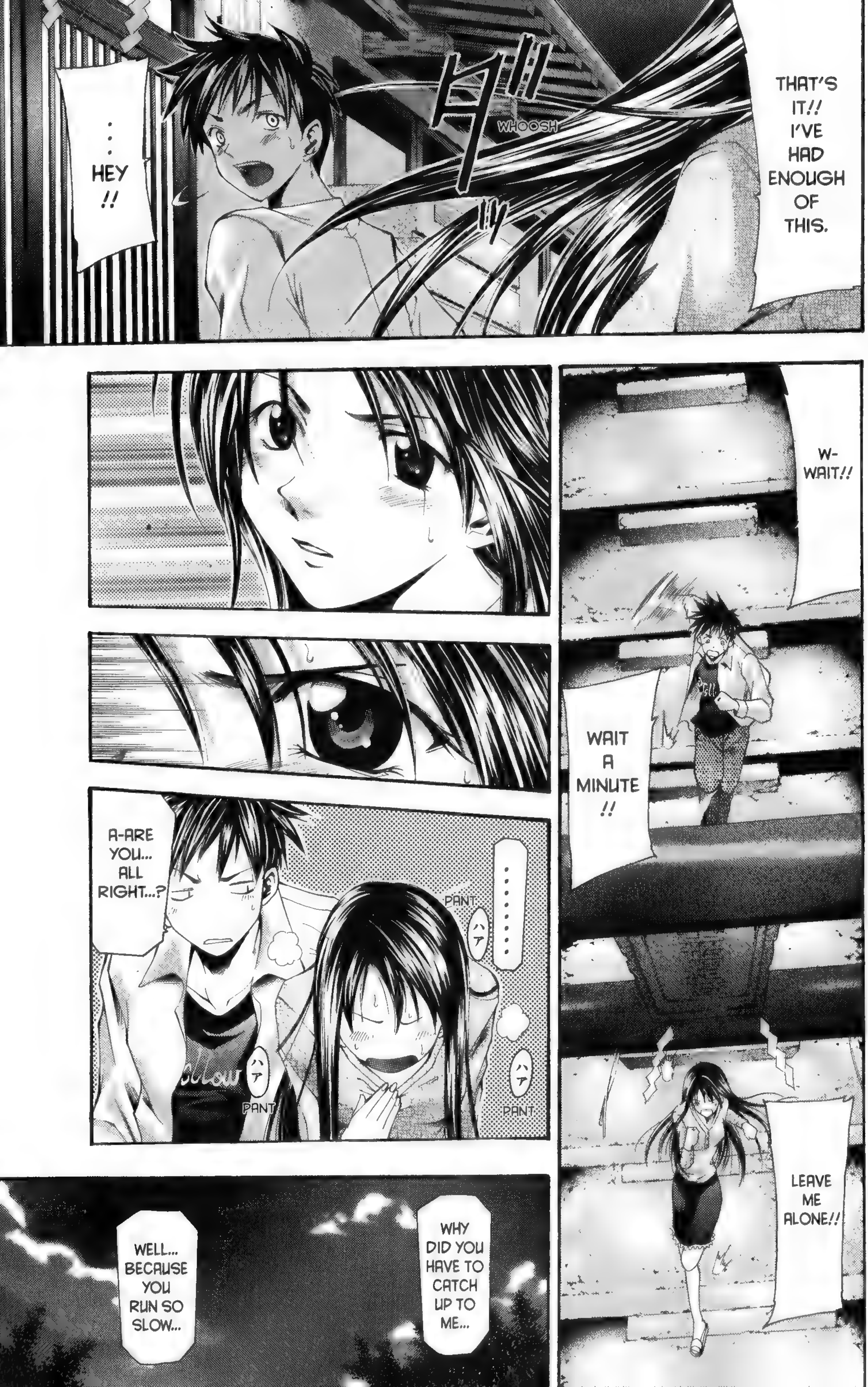

H-HEY...
...AKITSUKI-KUN.
W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? IT'S SO LATE...
WELL... I TRIED CALLING, BUT I COULDN'T GET THROUGH.
...HERE.
I...
...REALLY WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS.

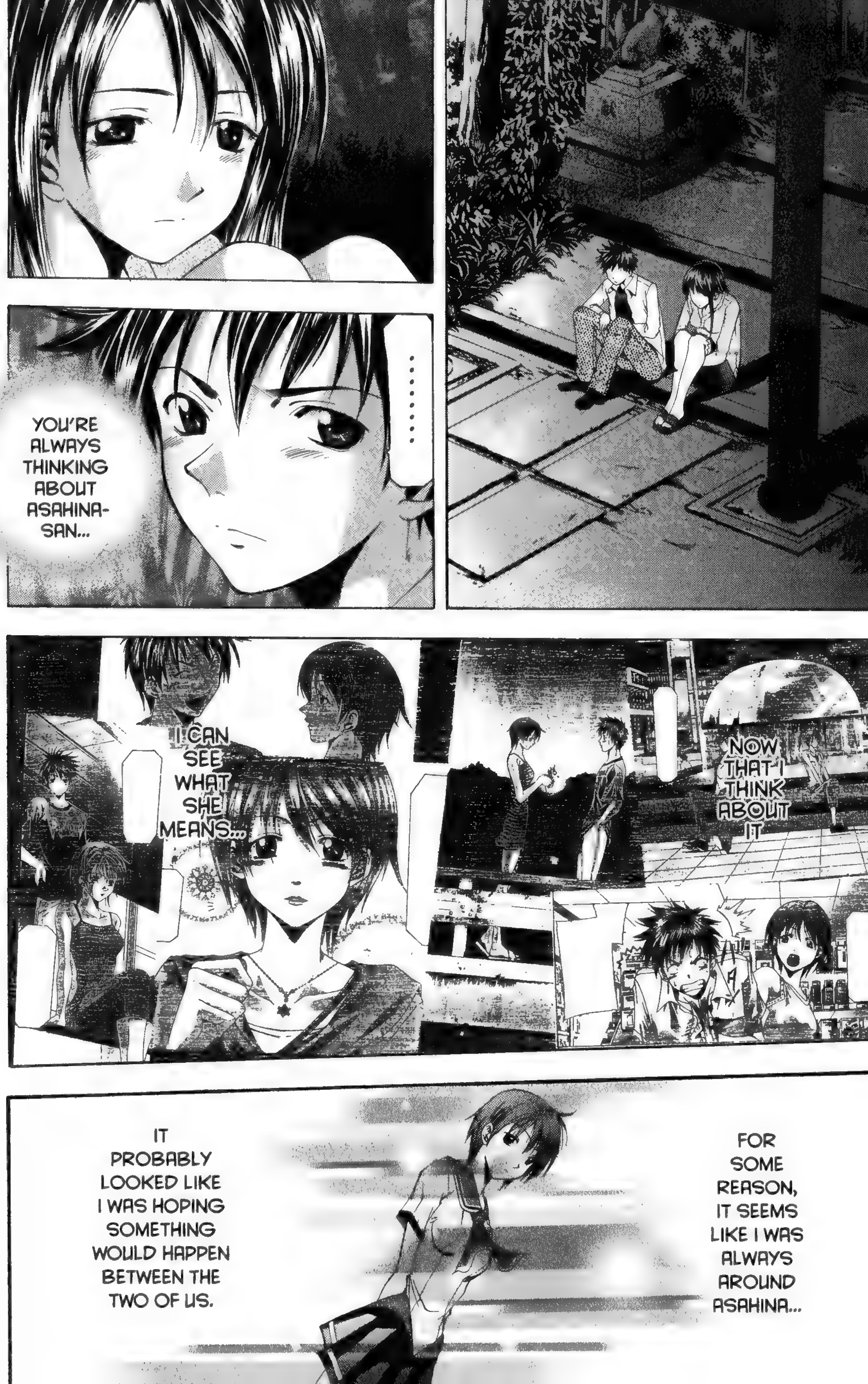

……
I TOLD YOU, I DON'T WANT IT ...
IF THAT'S WHY YOU CAME HERE THEN PLEASE, JUST GO.
HEY . . .
. . .
WAIT!!
I HEARD IT WAS YOUR BIRTHDAY, SO I TRIED AS HARD AS I COULD TO COME UP WITH A GOOD GIFT FOR YOU.
SO...WHY CAN'T YOU JUST BE HAPPY?

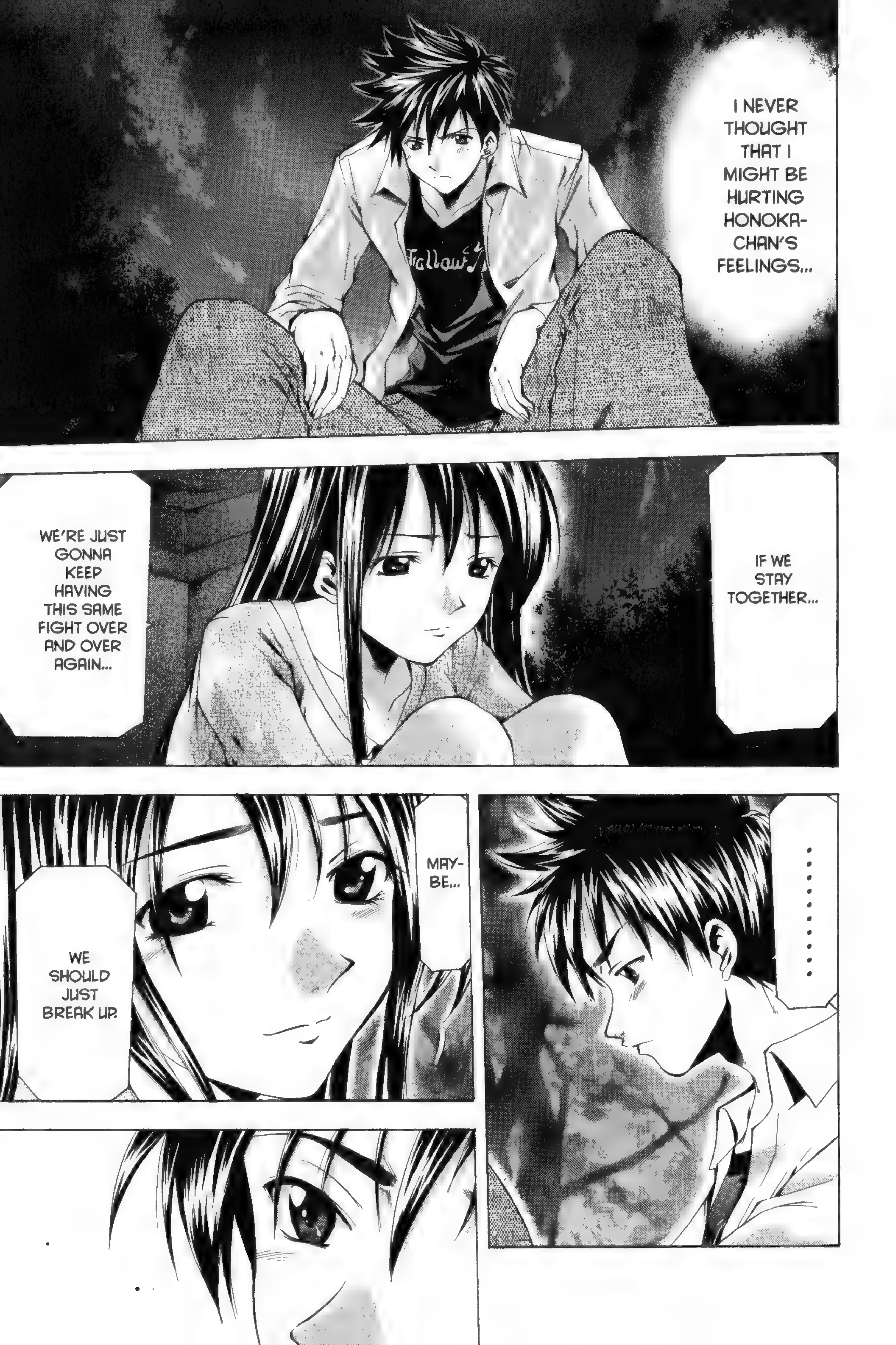

IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY THEN JUST SAY IT?!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON!
I TRIED TO BE HAPPY...
...WHAT?
BUT YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE HAVING SO MUCH FUN SHOPPING FOR MY PRESENT WITH ASAHINA-SAN...
HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO BE HAPPY!
I ALREADY TOLD YOU, I ONLY DID THAT BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO GET YOU, SO I HAD TO...
YOU COULD'VE ASKED SOMEONE ELSE!!
WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE ASAHINA-SAN?!

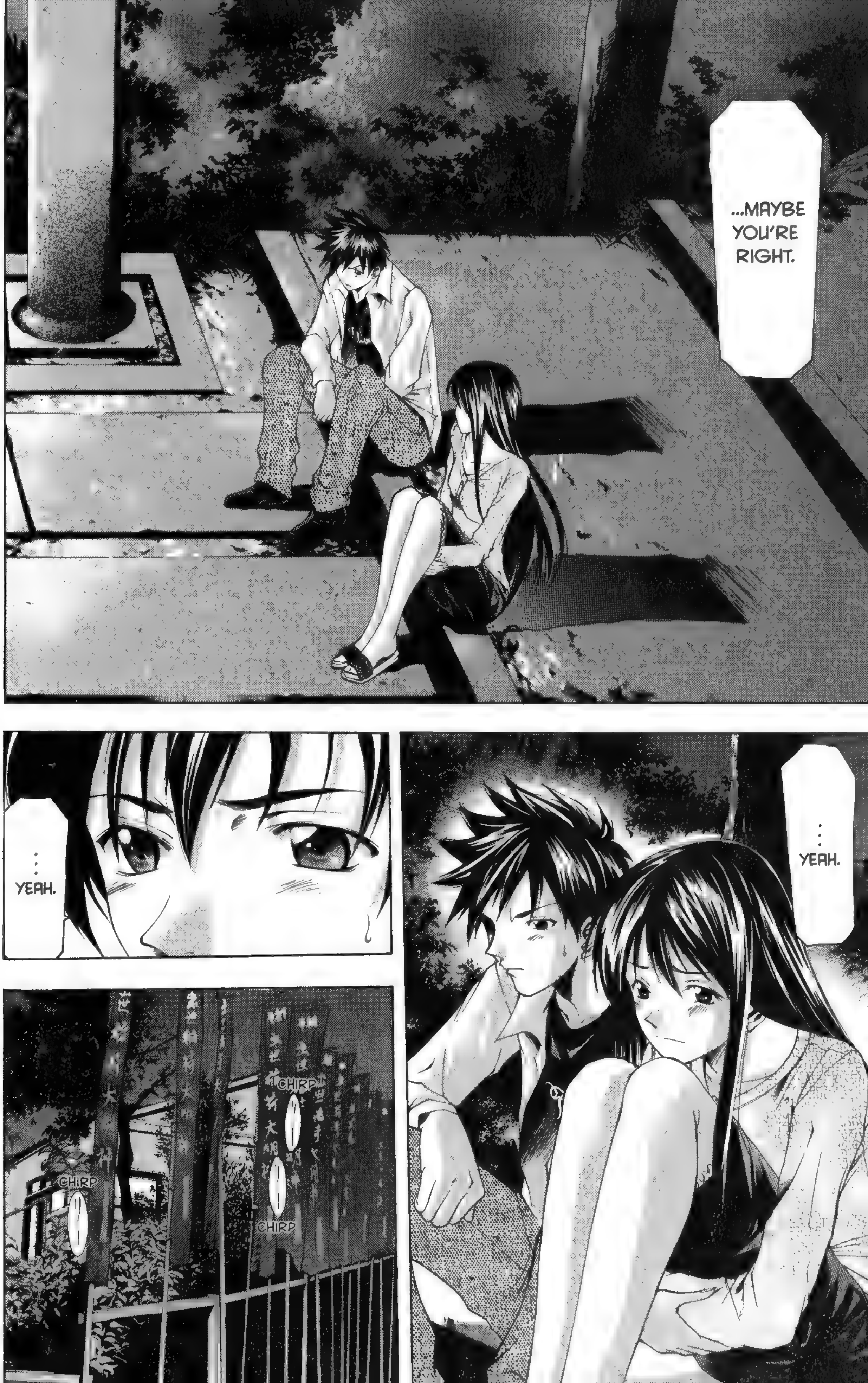

MAYBE YOU JUST...
...WANTED TO GO OUT WITH HER!
W-WHAT? THAT'S RIDICULOUS!!
NO IT ISN'T!!
I KNOW THAT'S THE TRUTH.
YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT ASAHINA-SAN.
YOU CAN MAKE ALL THE EXCUSES YOU WANT, BUT I CAN TELL... EVERY TIME I LOOK AT YOU I CAN TELL!

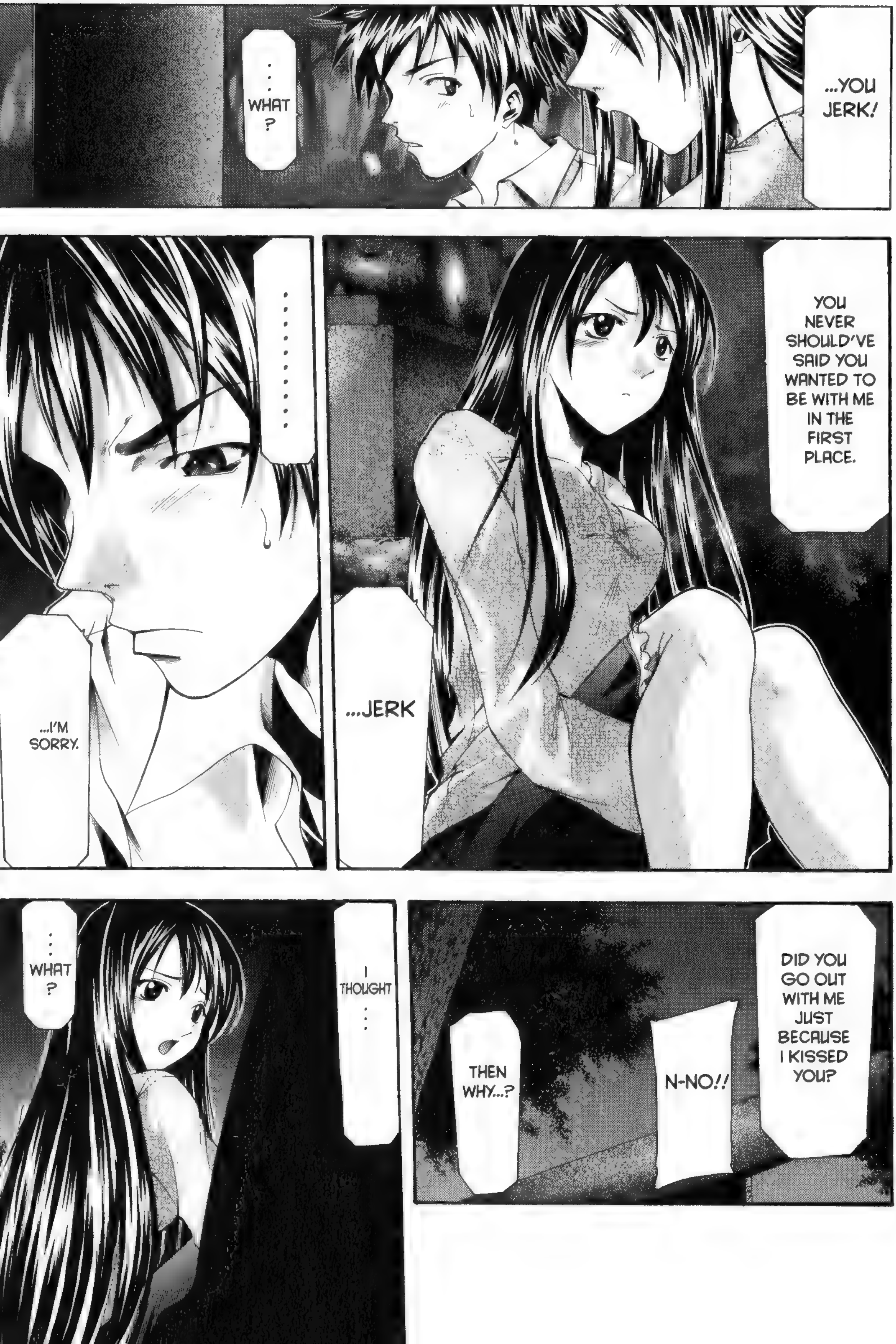

YOU STILL LIKE ASAHINA-SAN DON'T YOU?!
WAY MORE THAN YOU'LL EVER LIKE ME...
ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH ALREADY! JUST SHUT UP!
I DON'T WANNA HEAR ANOTHER WORD ABOUT ASAHINA!!
FWAHHH

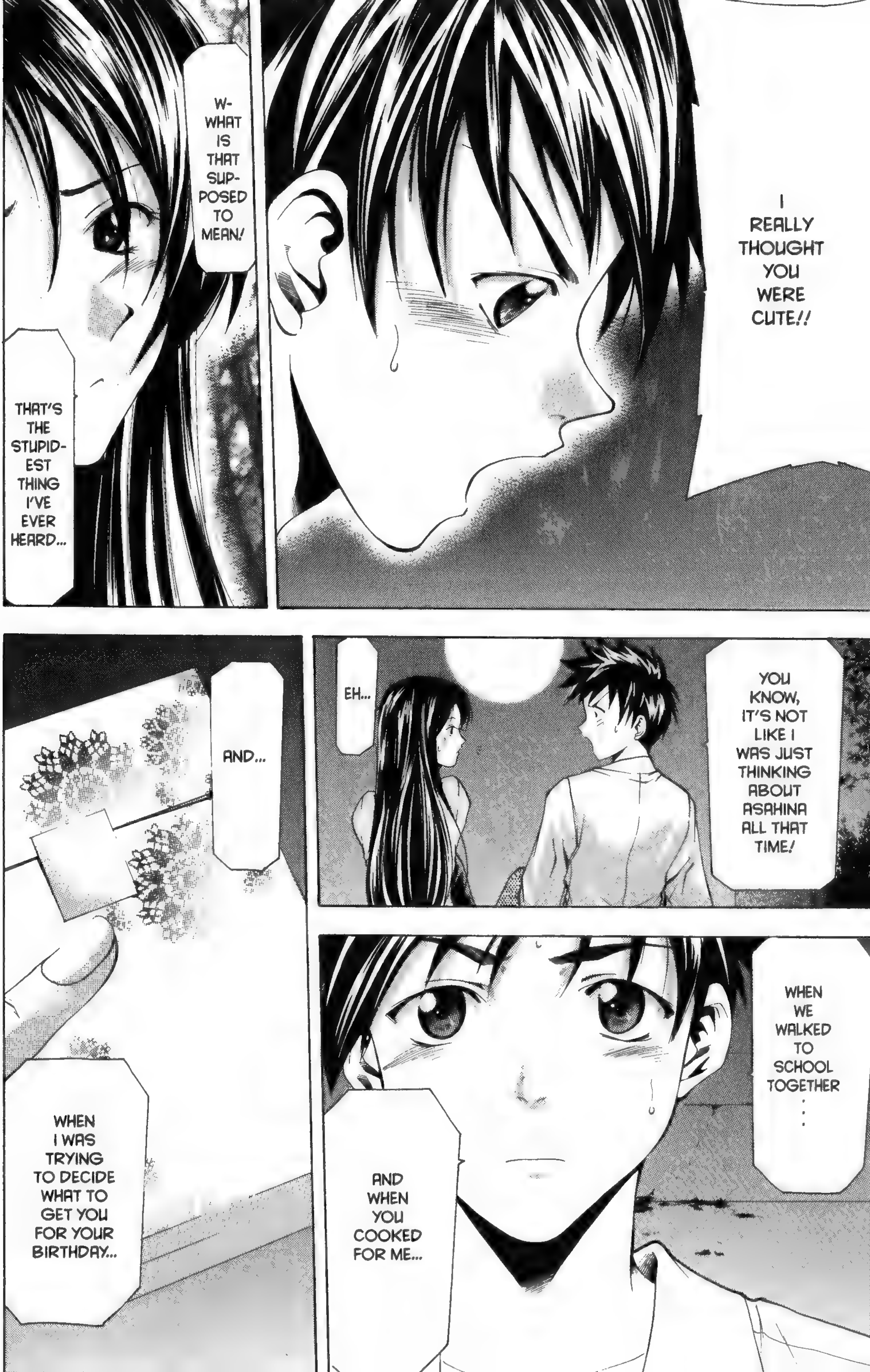

THAT'S IT!! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS.
WHOOSH
...HEY!!
W-WAIT!!
WAIT A MINUTE!!
LEAVE ME ALONE!!
A-ARE YOU... ALL RIGHT...?
......
ハァ PANT
ハァ PANT
ハァ PANT
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO CATCH UP TO ME...
WELL... BECAUSE YOU RUN SO SLOW...

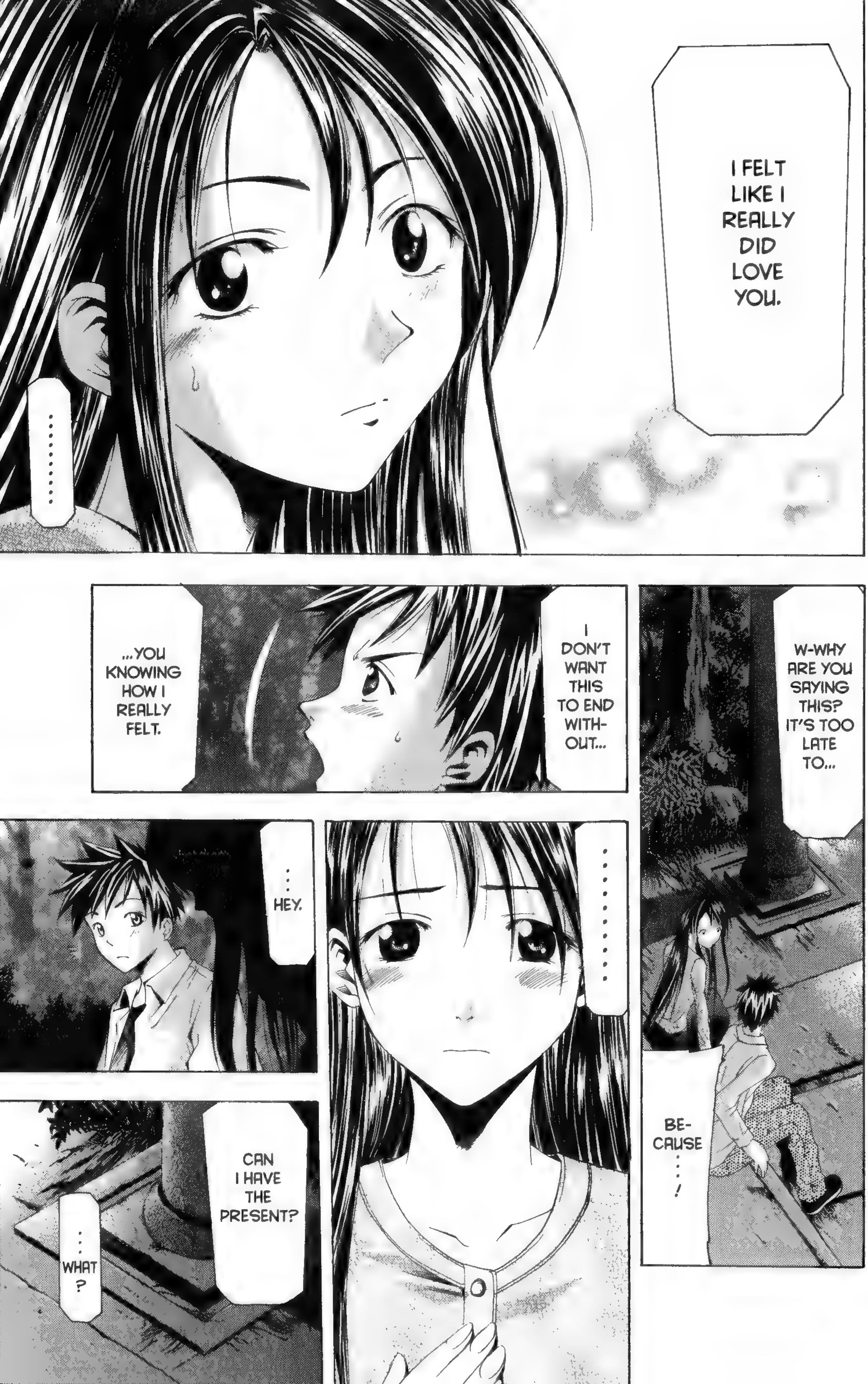

......
YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT ASAHINA-SAN...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT
I CAN SEE WHAT SHE MEANS...
FOR SOME REASON, IT SEEMS LIKE I WAS ALWAYS AROUND ASAHINA...
IT PROBABLY LOOKED LIKE I WAS HOPING SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN BETWEEN THE TWO OF US.

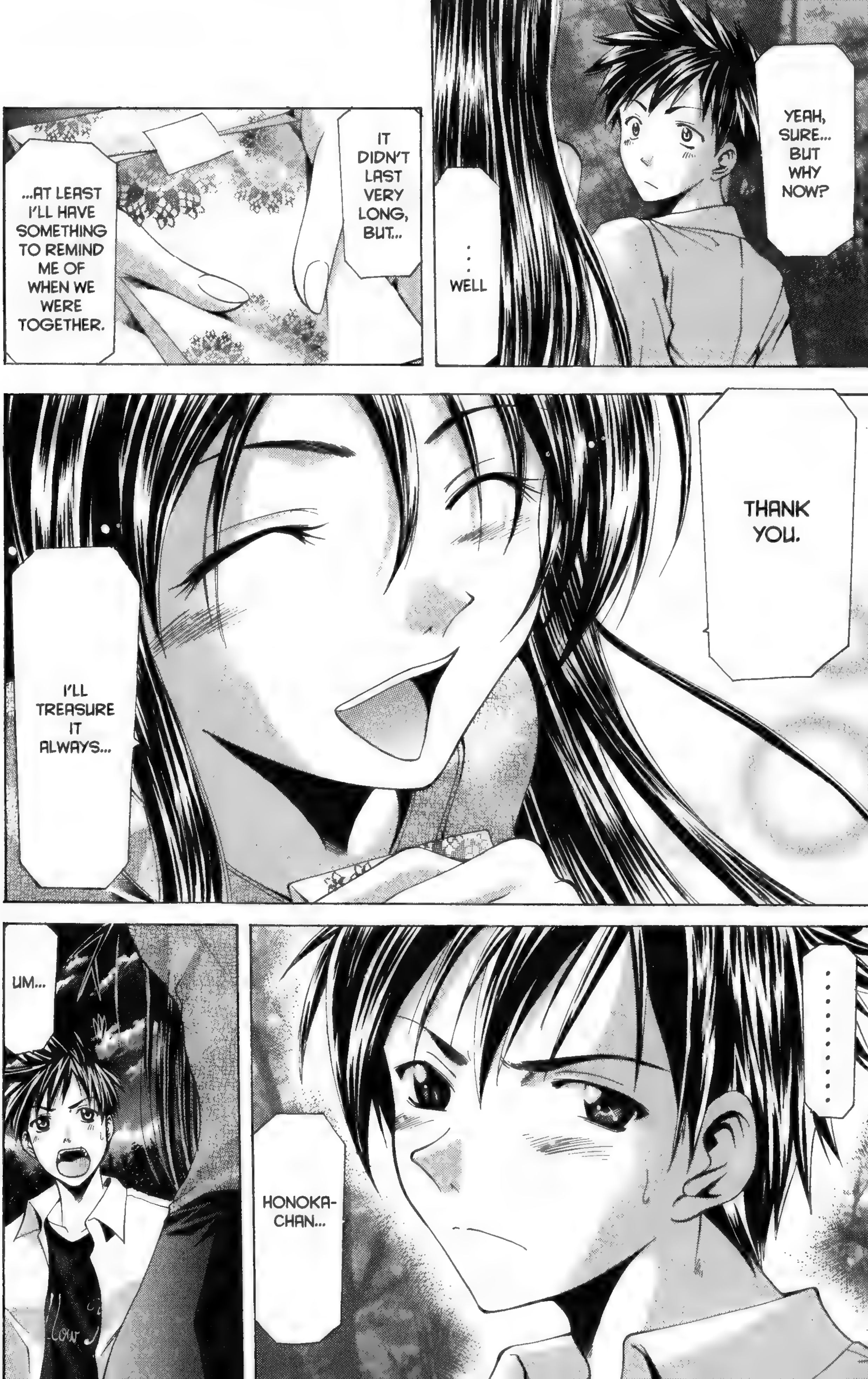

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT I MIGHT BE HURTING HONOKA-CHAN'S FEELINGS...
IF WE STAY TOGETHER...
WE'RE JUST GONNA KEEP HAVING THIS SAME FIGHT OVER AND OVER AGAIN...
....
MAYBE...
WE SHOULD JUST BREAK UP.

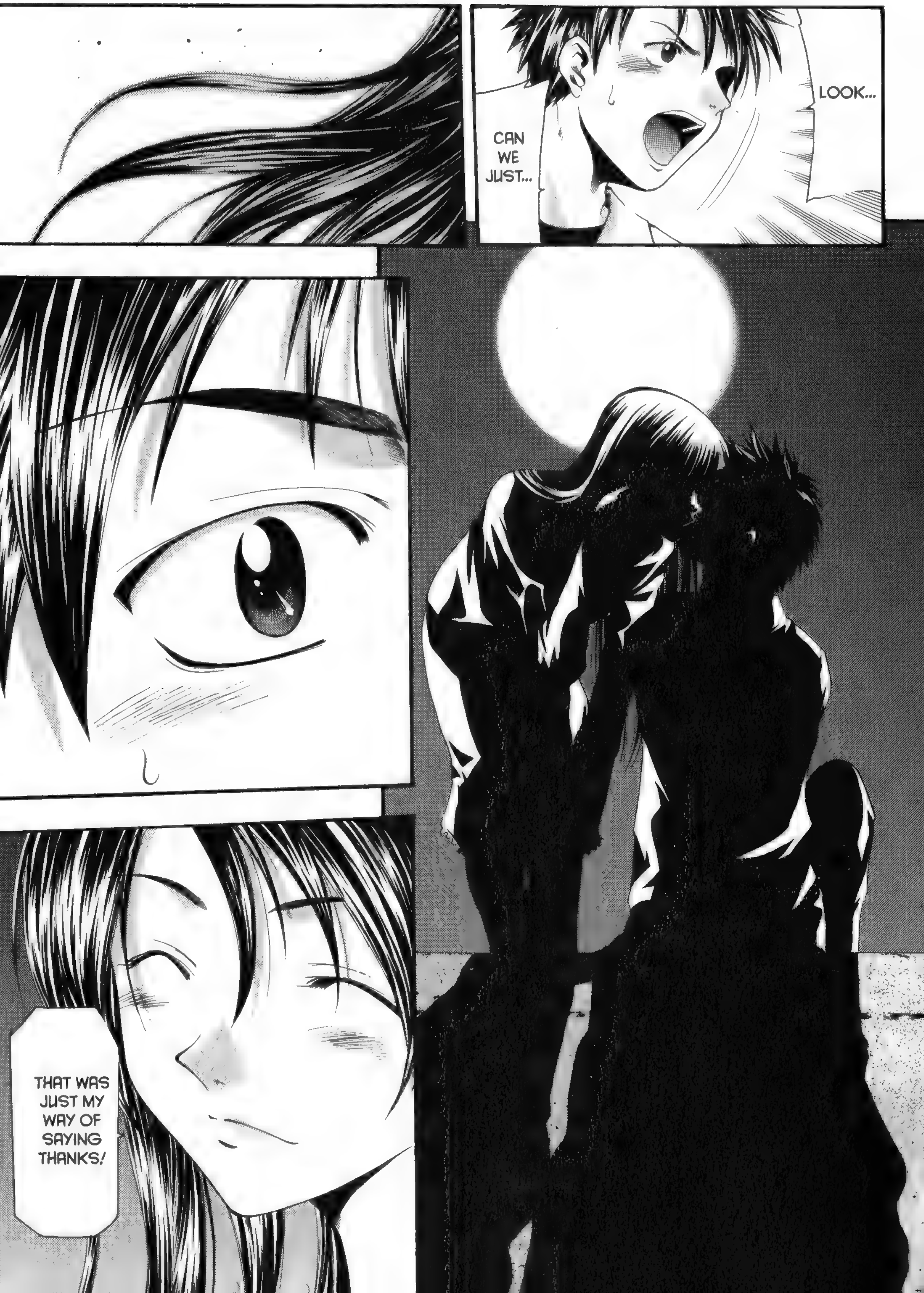

...MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
... YEAH.
... YEAH.
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP

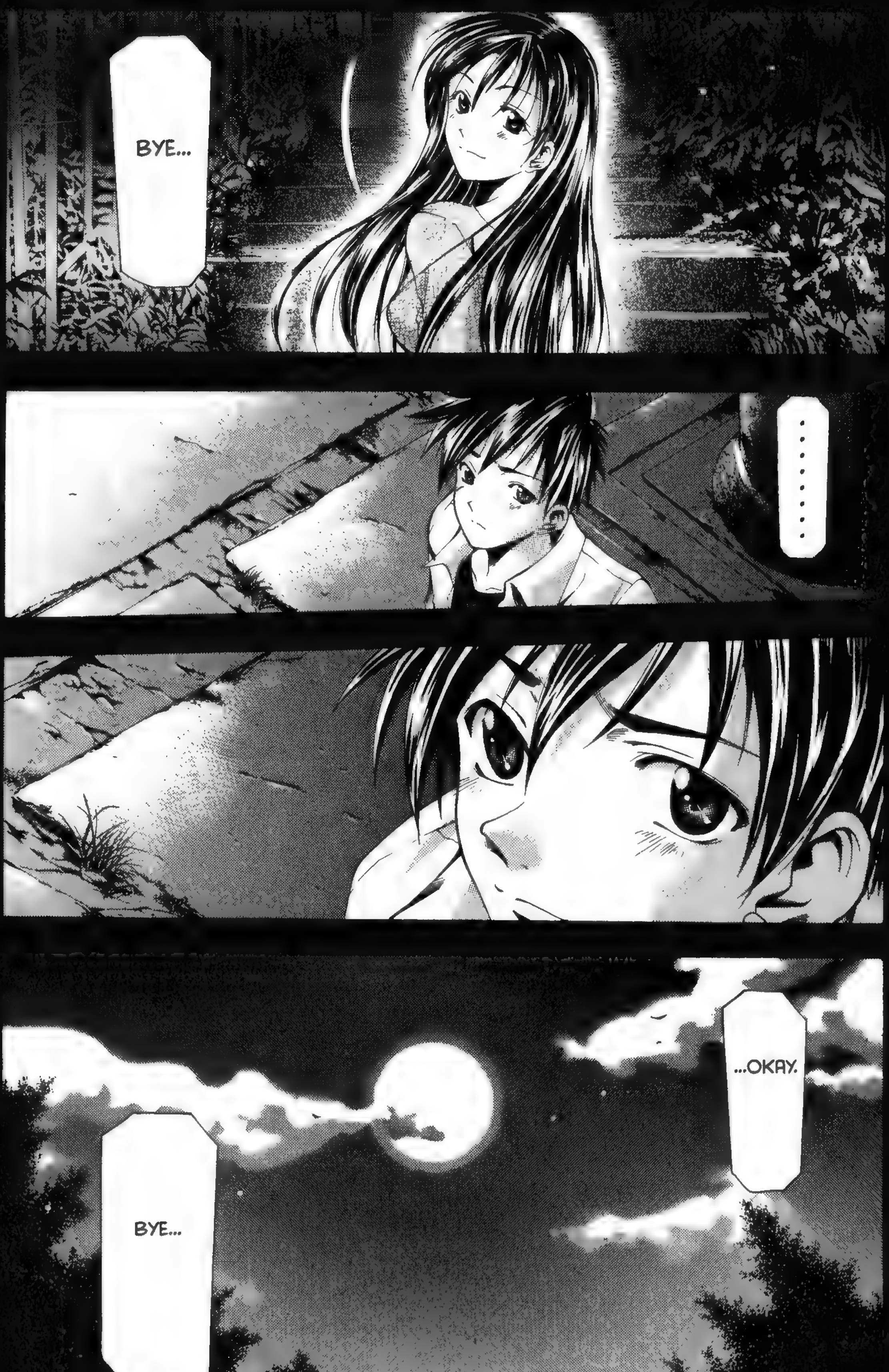

...YOU JERK!
...WHAT?
YOU NEVER SHOULD'VE SAID YOU WANTED TO BE WITH ME IN THE FIRST PLACE.
...JERK
....
...I'M SORRY.
DID YOU GO OUT WITH ME JUST BECAUSE I KISSED YOU?
N-NO!!
THEN WHY...?
I THOUGHT...
...WHAT?


I REALLY THOUGHT YOU WERE CUTE!!
W-WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN!
THAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD...
YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT ASAHINA ALL THAT TIME!
EH...
WHEN WE WALKED TO SCHOOL TOGETHER...
AND WHEN YOU COOKED FOR ME...
AND...
WHEN I WAS TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT TO GET YOU FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY...


I FELT LIKE I REALLY DID LOVE YOU.
....
W-WHY ARE YOU SAYING THIS? IT'S TOO LATE TO...
BE-CAUSE...!
I DON'T WANT THIS TO END WITH-OUT...
...YOU KNOWING HOW I REALLY FELT.
....
...HEY.
CAN I HAVE THE PRESENT?
...WHAT?

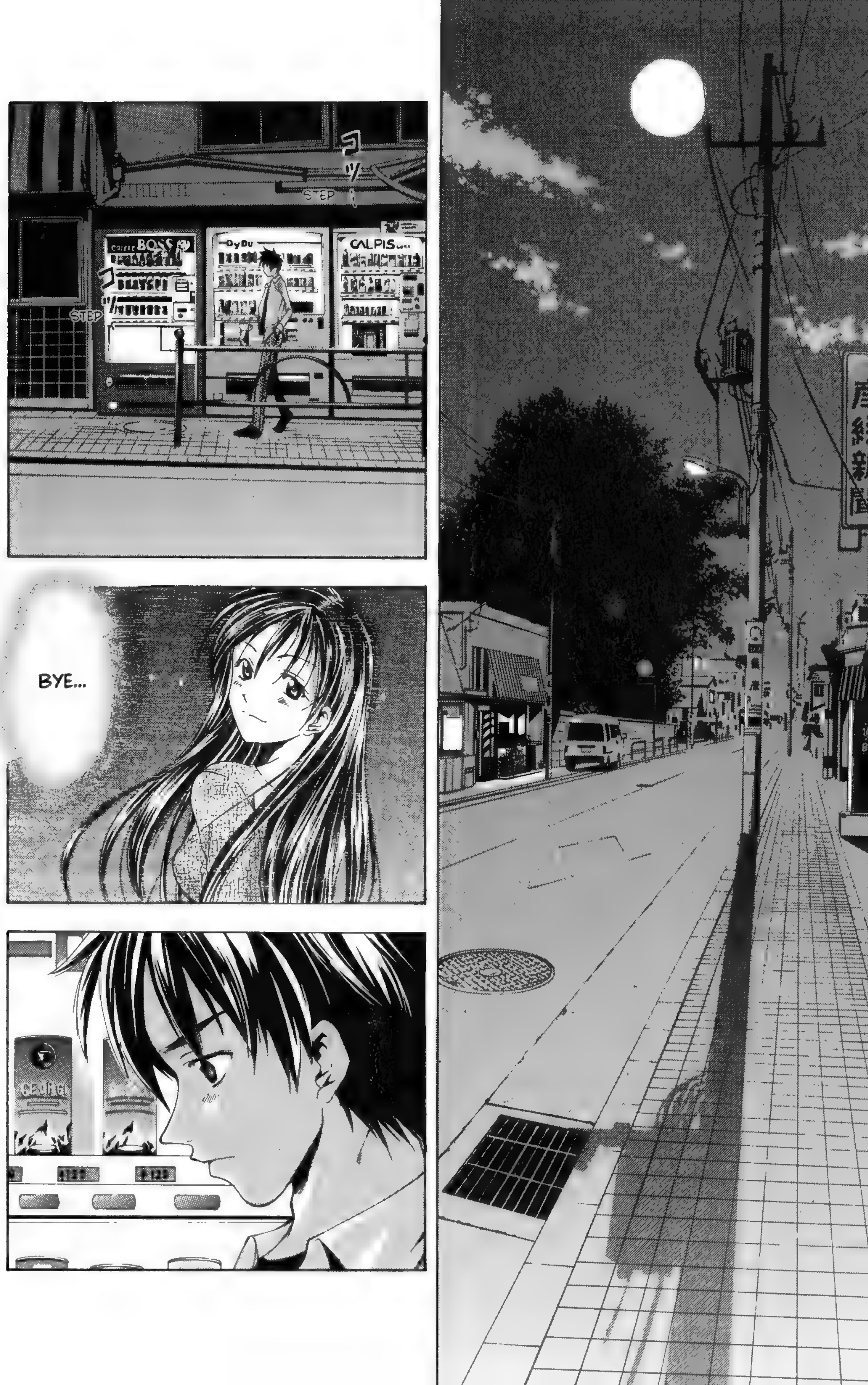

YEAH, SURE... BUT WHY NOW?
... WELL
IT DIDN'T LAST VERY LONG, BUT...
...AT LEAST I'LL HAVE SOMETHING TO REMIND ME OF WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER.
THANK YOU.
I'LL TREASURE IT ALWAYS...
....
HONOKA-CHAN...
UM...

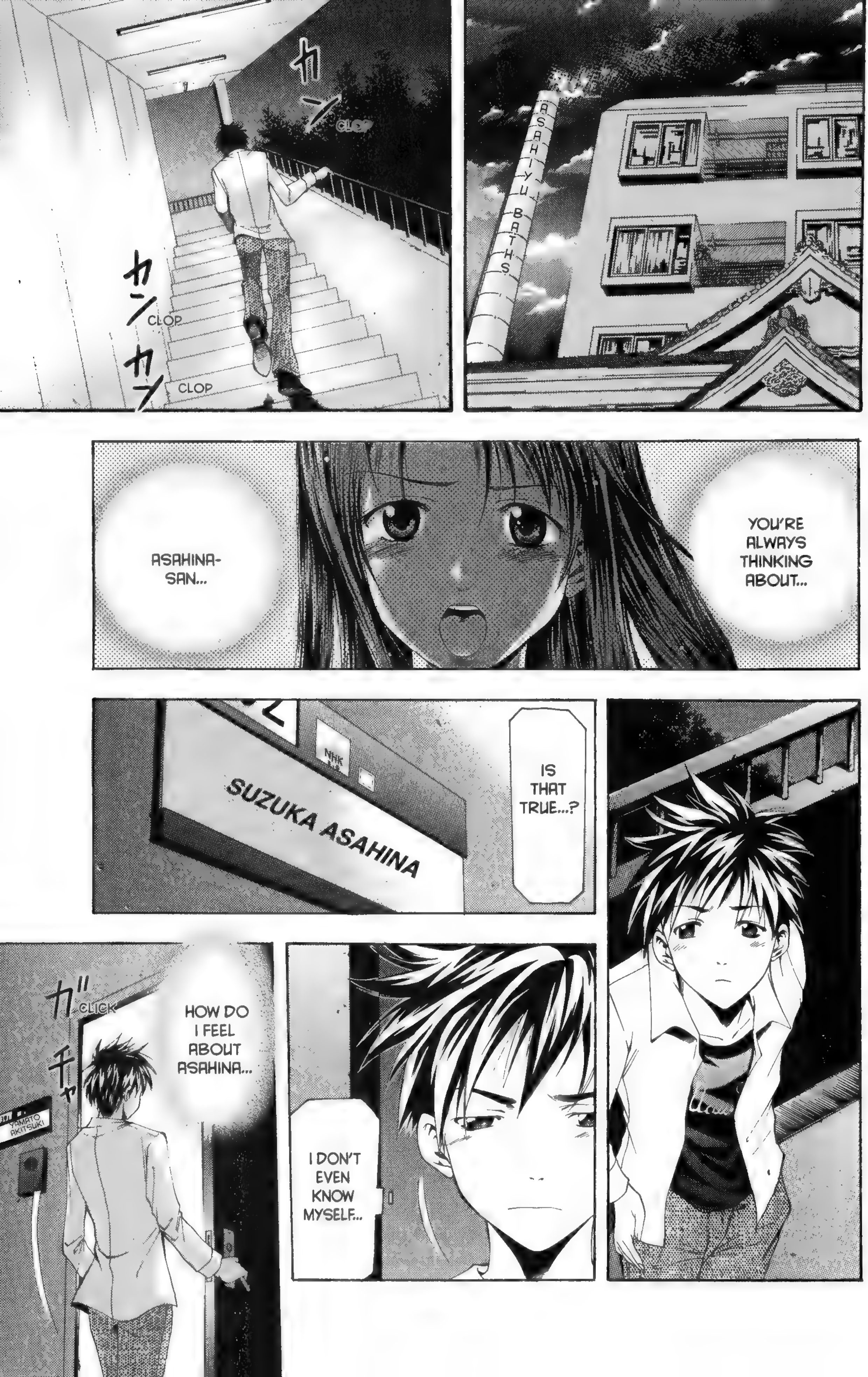

LOOK...
CAN WE JUST...
THAT WAS JUST MY WAY OF SAYING THANKS!

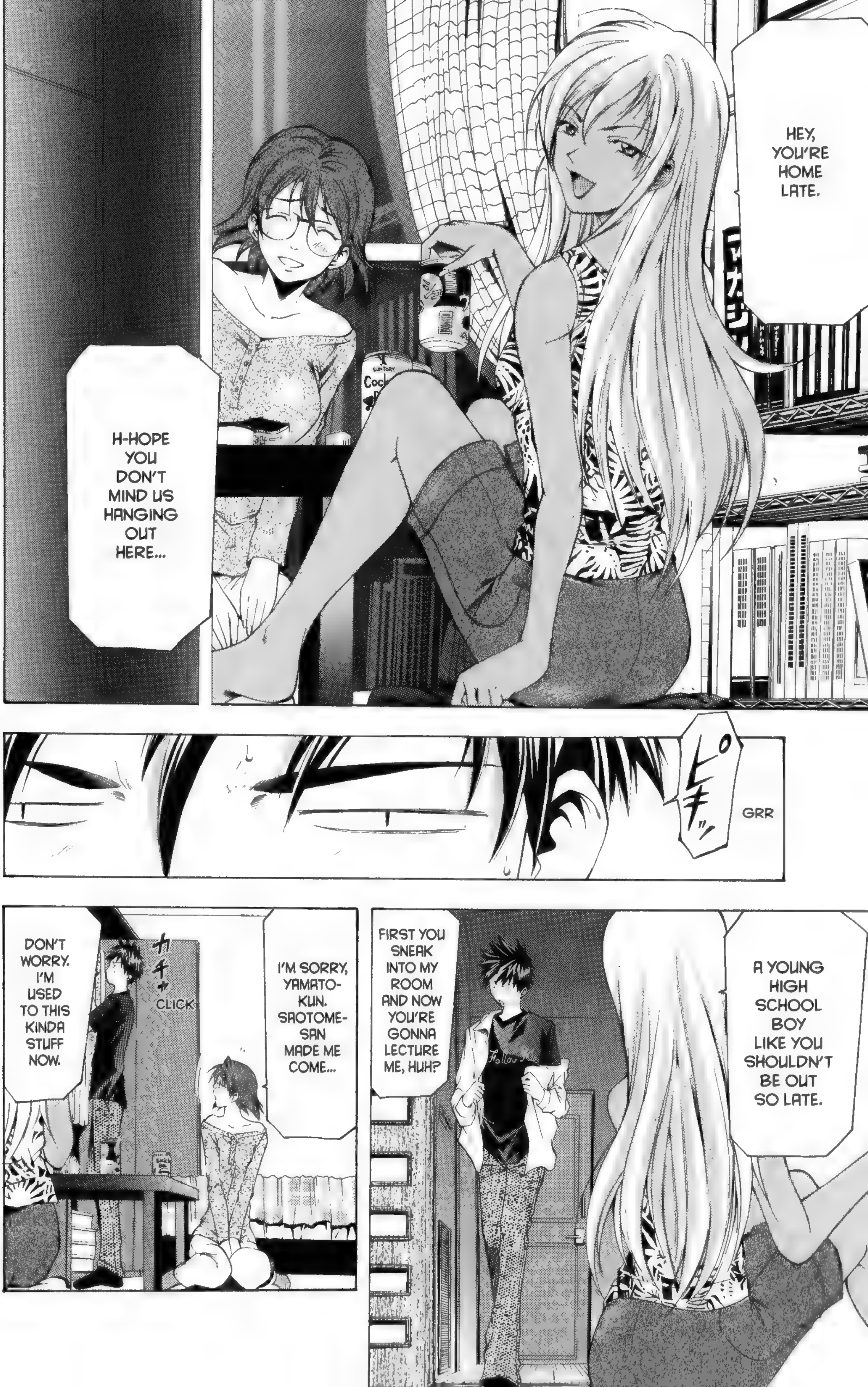

BYE...
......
...OKAY.
BYE...

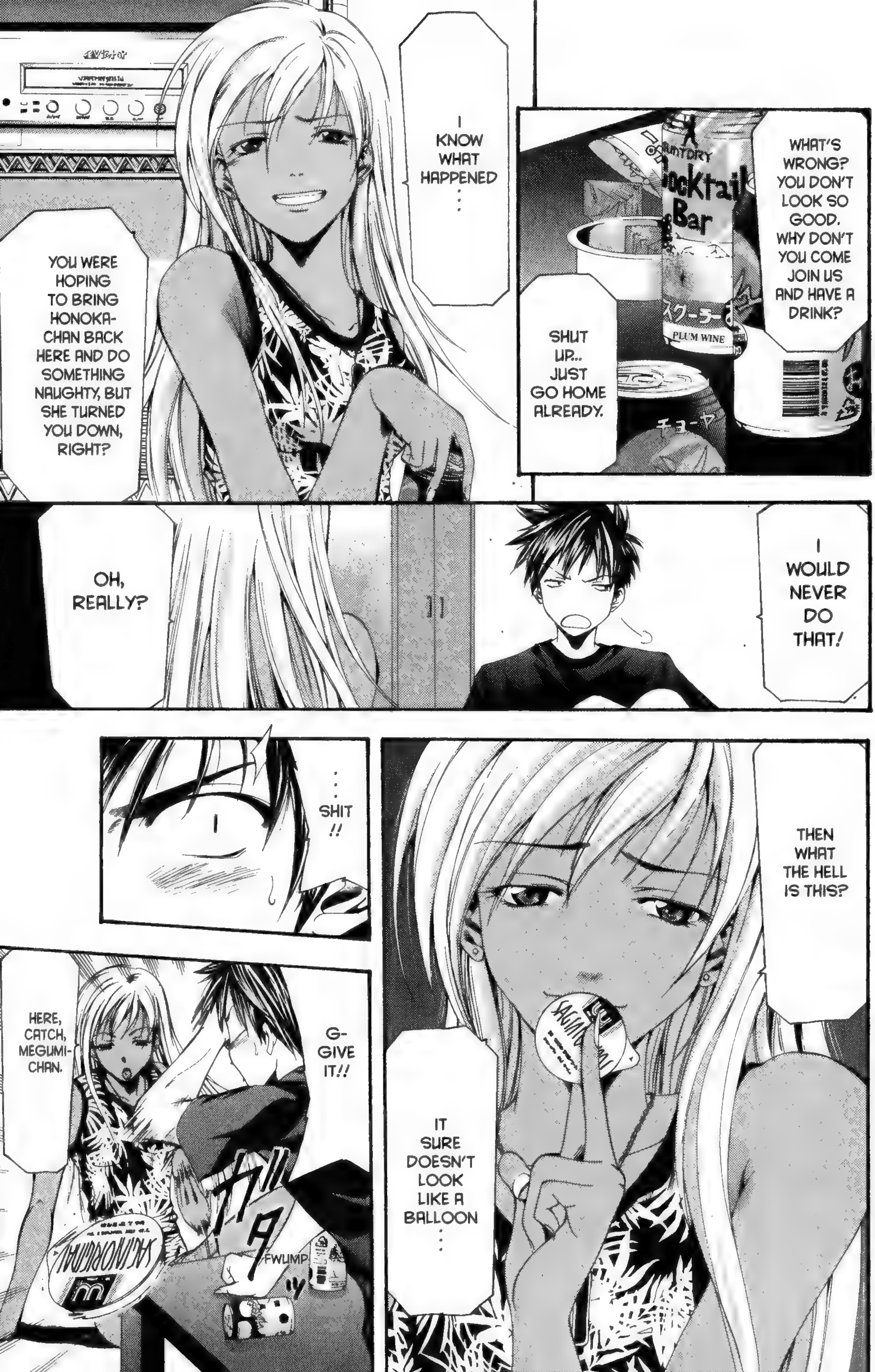
SUZUKA

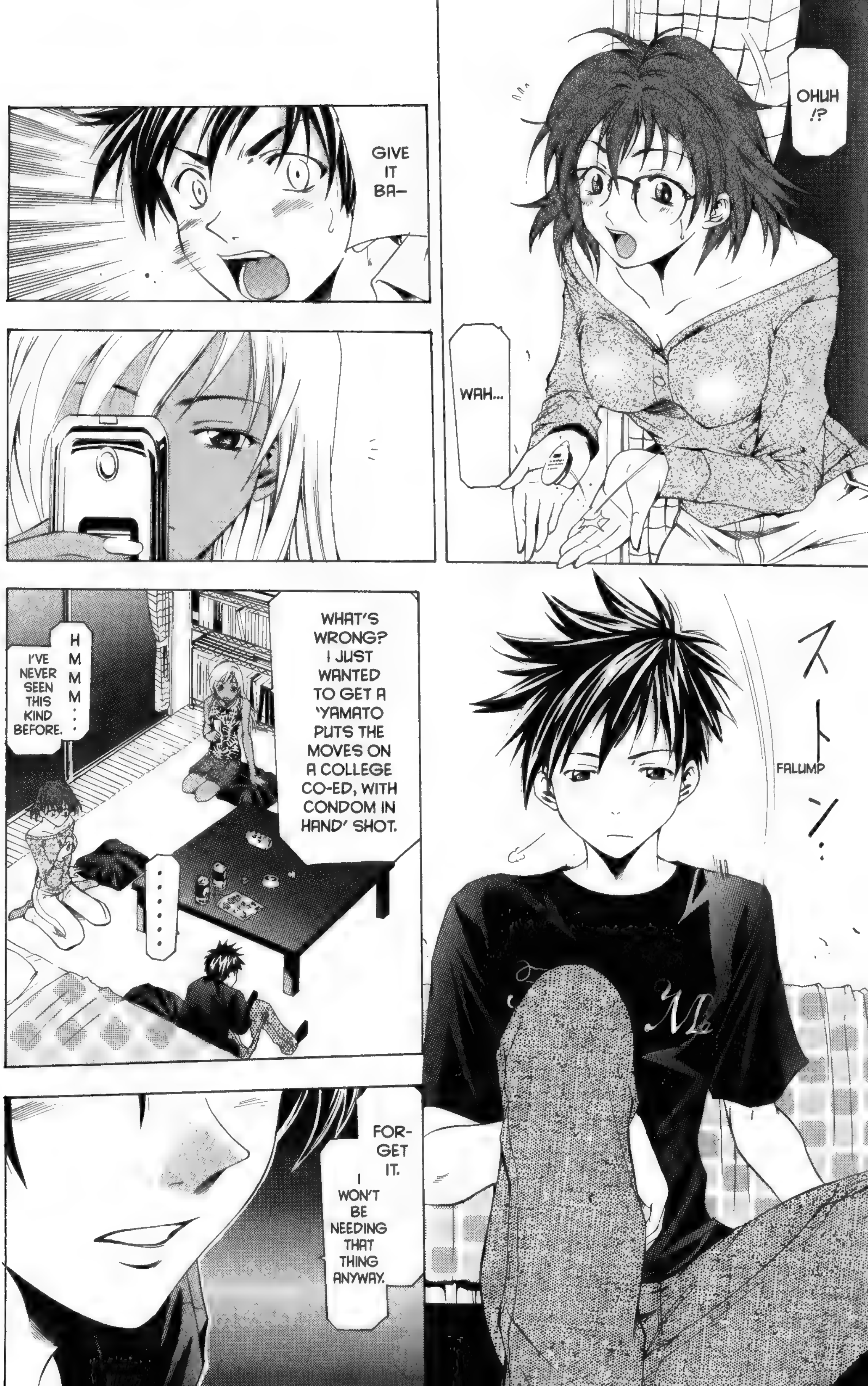
#53 THE WORST

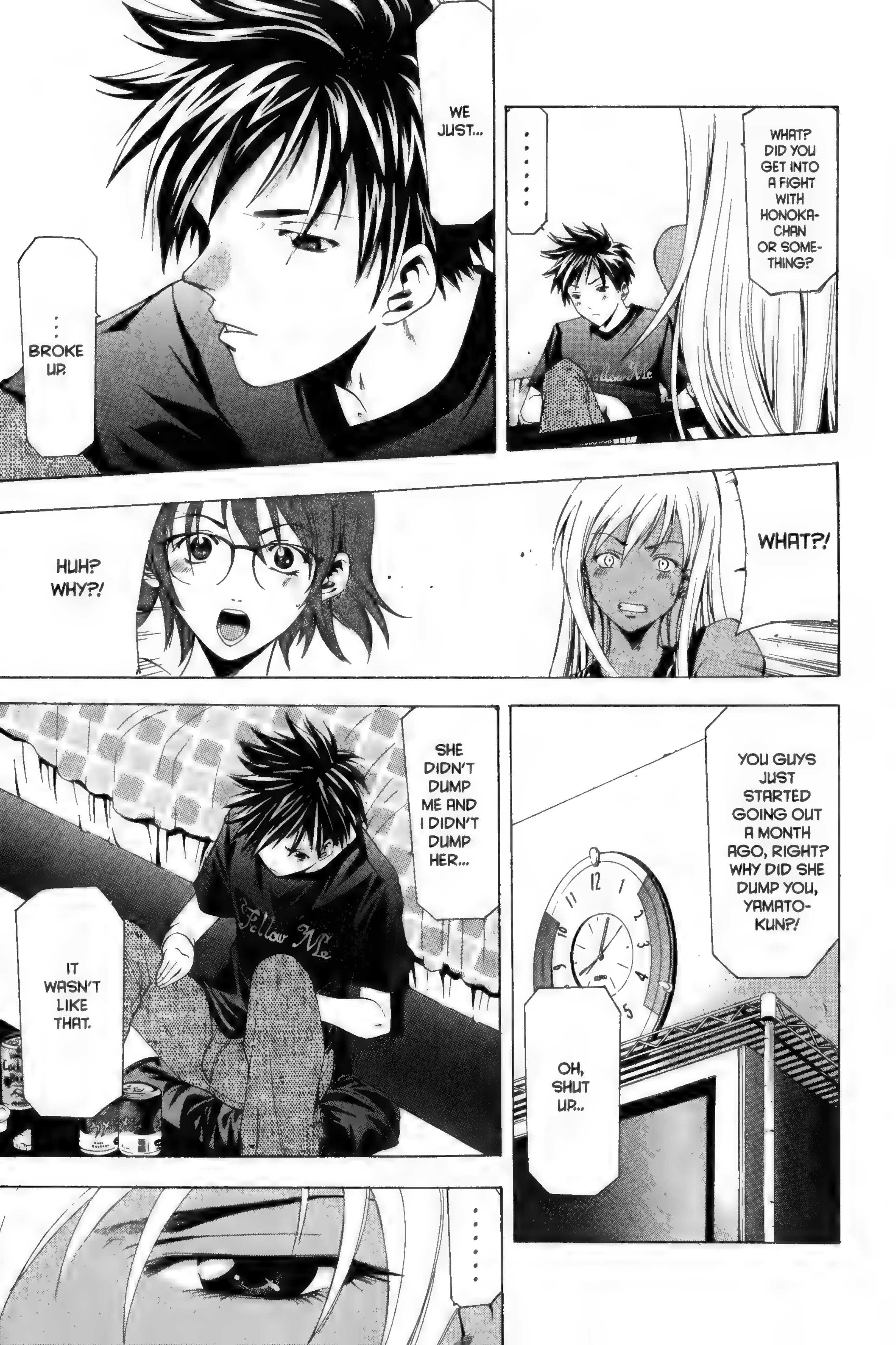

コツ
STEP
コツ
STEP
BOSS
DyDo
CALPIS
BYE...

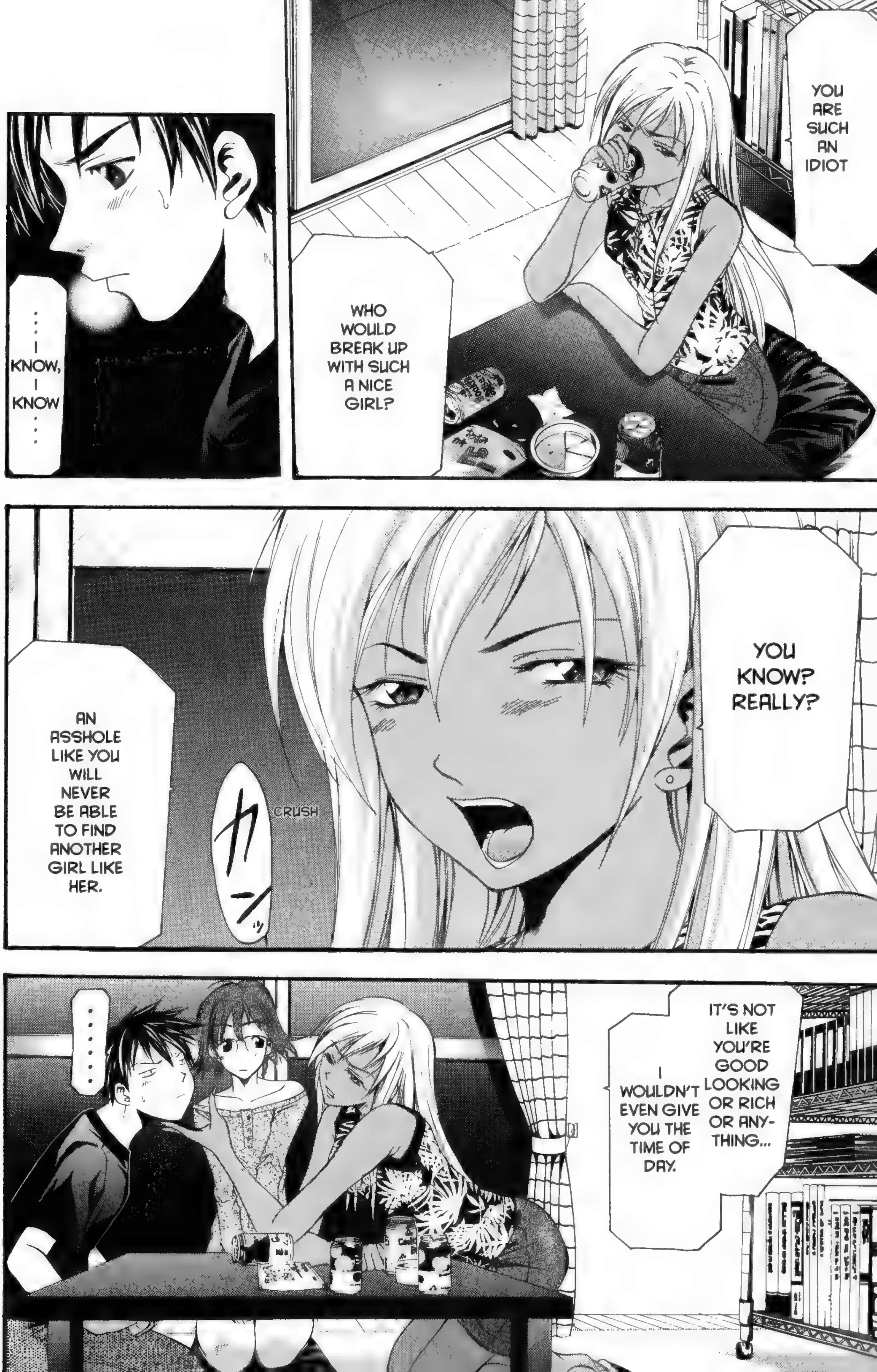

ASAHIYU BATHS
カン CLOP
カン CLOP
カン CLOP
YOU'RE ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT...
ASAHINA-SAN...
IS THAT TRUE...?
NHK
SUZUKA ASAHINA
I DON'T EVEN KNOW MYSELF...
HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT ASAHINA...
ガチャ CLICK
YAMATO AKITSUKI

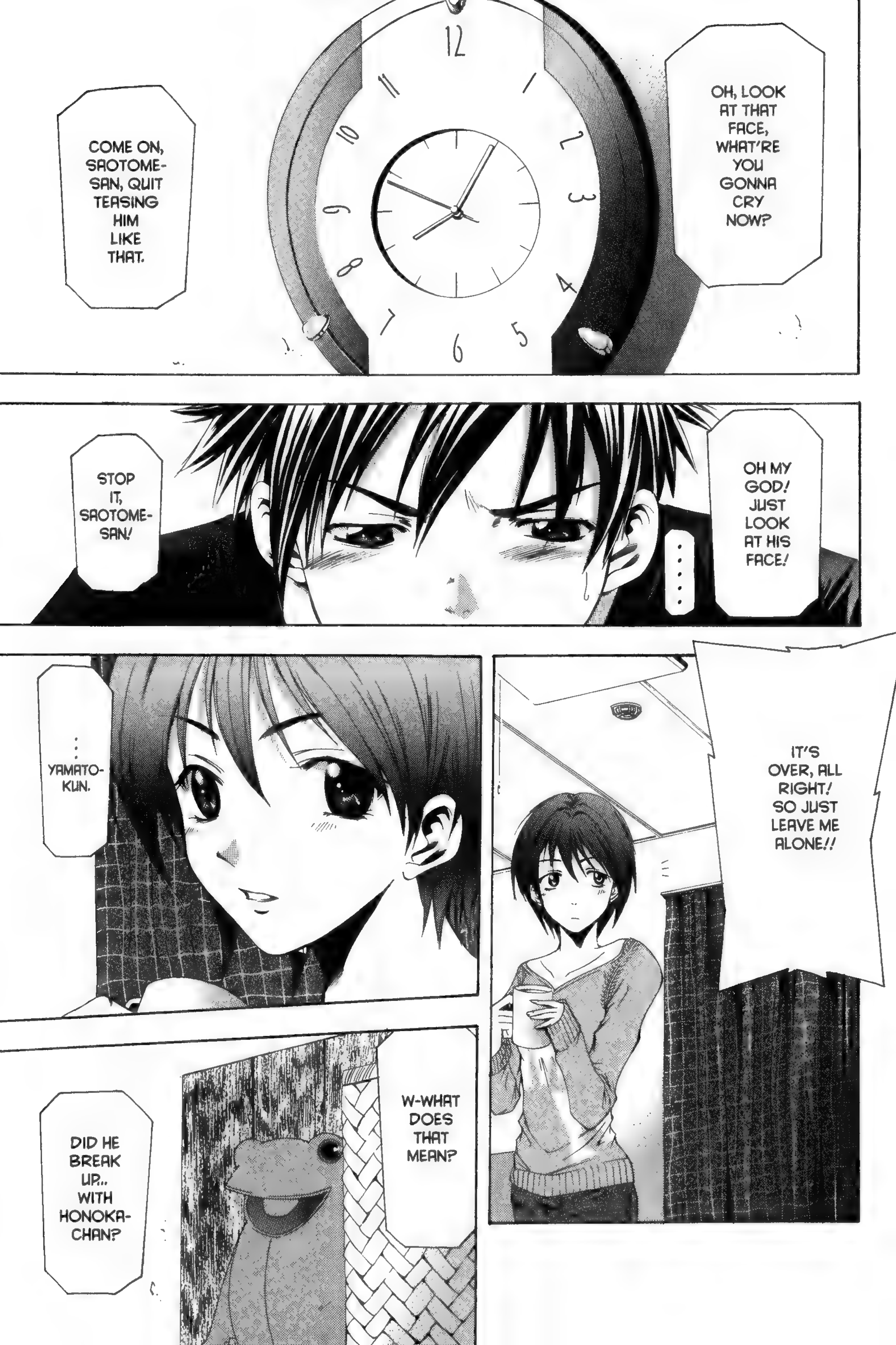

HEY, YOU'RE HOME LATE.
H-HOPE YOU DON'T MIND US HANGING OUT HERE...
GRR
A YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL BOY LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT SO LATE.
FIRST YOU SNEAK INTO MY ROOM AND NOW YOU'RE GONNA LECTURE ME, HUH?
I'M SORRY, YAMATO-KUN. SAOTOME-SAN MADE ME COME...
カチャ
CLICK
DON'T WORRY. I'M USED TO THIS KINDA STUFF NOW.

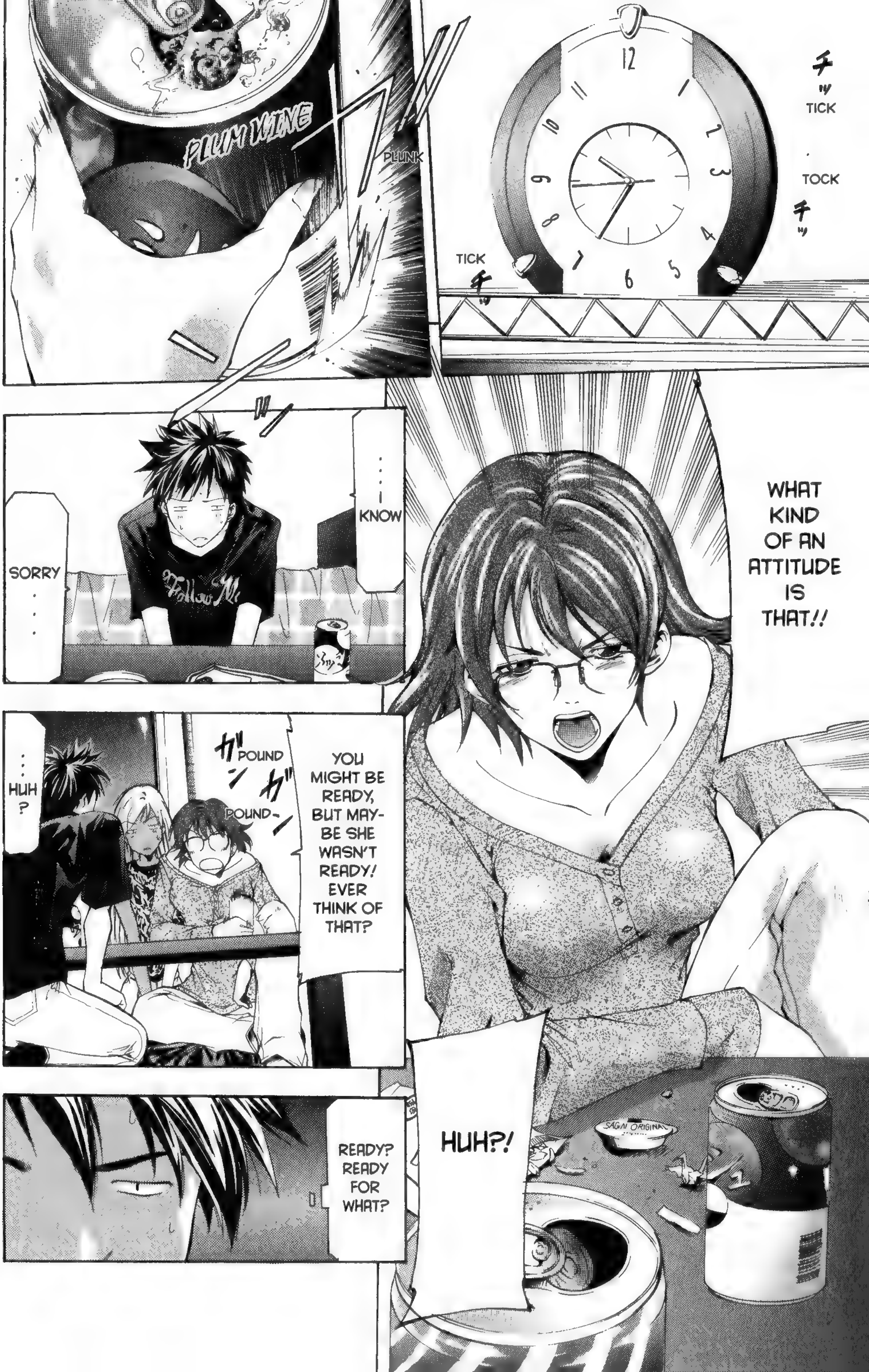

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD. WHY DON'T YOU COME JOIN US AND HAVE A DRINK?
SUNTORY Cocktail Bar
PLUM WINE
チョーヤ
SHUT UP... JUST GO HOME ALREADY.
I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED...
YOU WERE HOPING TO BRING HONOKA-CHAN BACK HERE AND DO SOMETHING NAUGHTY, BUT SHE TURNED YOU DOWN, RIGHT?
I WOULD NEVER DO THAT!
OH, REALLY?
THEN WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
IT SURE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A BALLOON...
...SHIT!!
G-GIVE IT!!
HERE, CATCH, MEGUMI-CHAN.
FWUMP

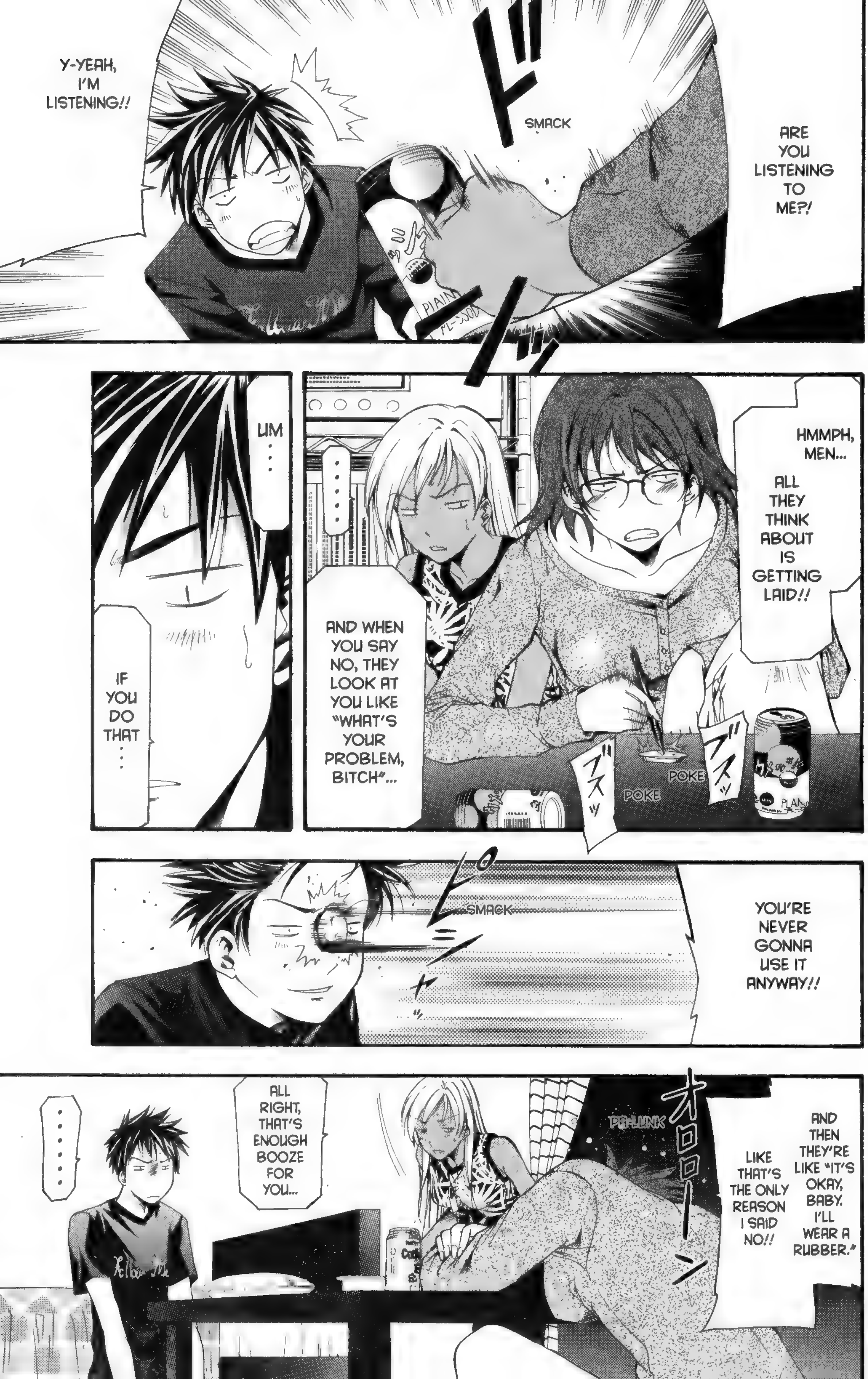

OHUH !?
WAH...
GIVE IT BA—
ストン
FALUMP
WHAT'S WRONG? I JUST WANTED TO GET A 'YAMATO PUTS THE MOVES ON A COLLEGE CO-ED, WITH CONDOM IN HAND' SHOT.
HMMM...
I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS KIND BEFORE.
......
FORGET IT.
I WON'T BE NEEDING THAT THING ANYWAY.

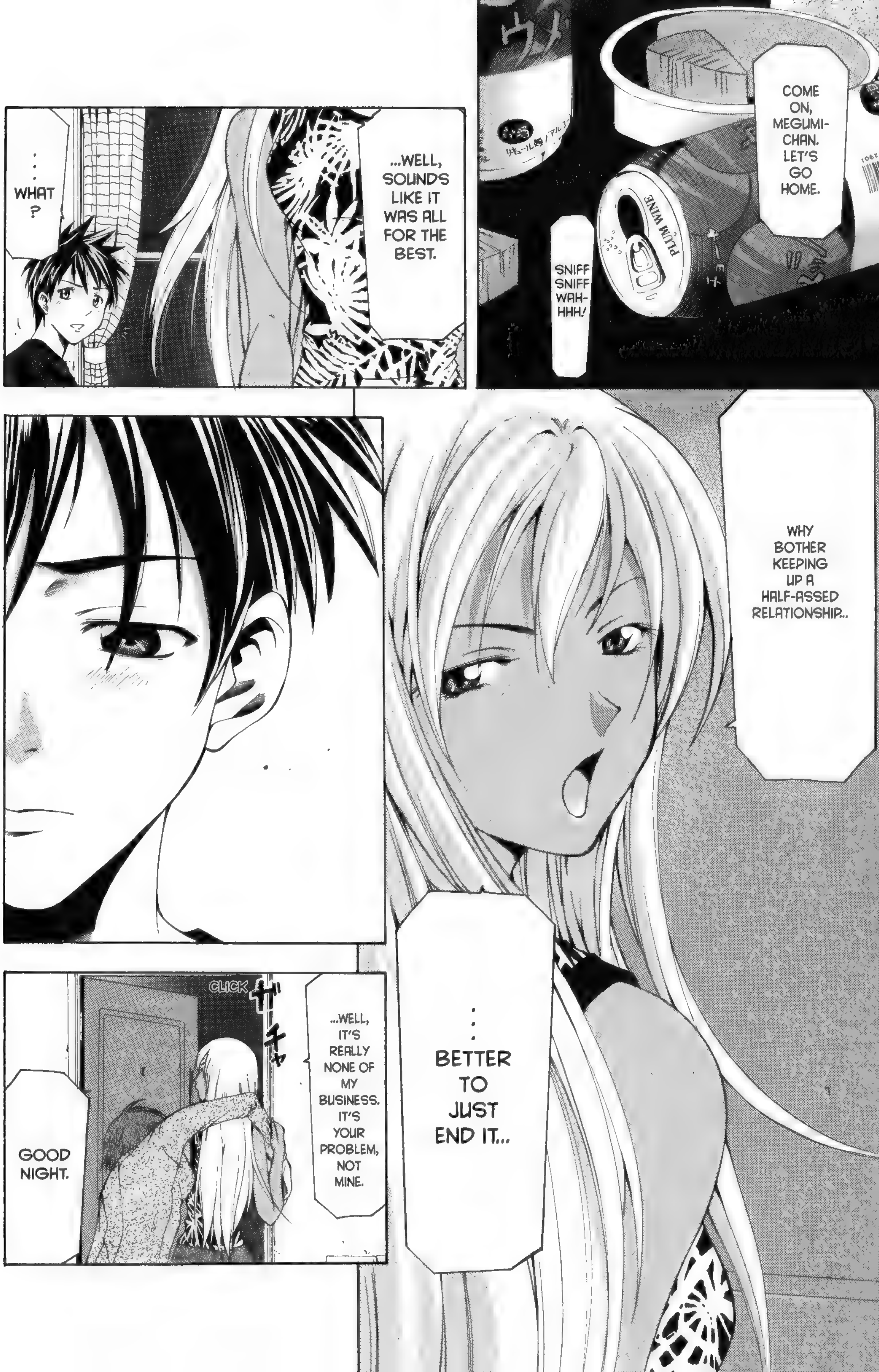

WHAT? DID YOU GET INTO A FIGHT WITH HONOKA-CHAN OR SOMETHING?
……
WE JUST...
...BROKE UP.
WHAT?!
HUH? WHY?!
YOU GUYS JUST STARTED GOING OUT A MONTH AGO, RIGHT? WHY DID SHE DUMP YOU, YAMATO-KUN?!
OH, SHUT UP...
SHE DIDN'T DUMP ME AND I DIDN'T DUMP HER...
IT WASN'T LIKE THAT.
Follow Me
……

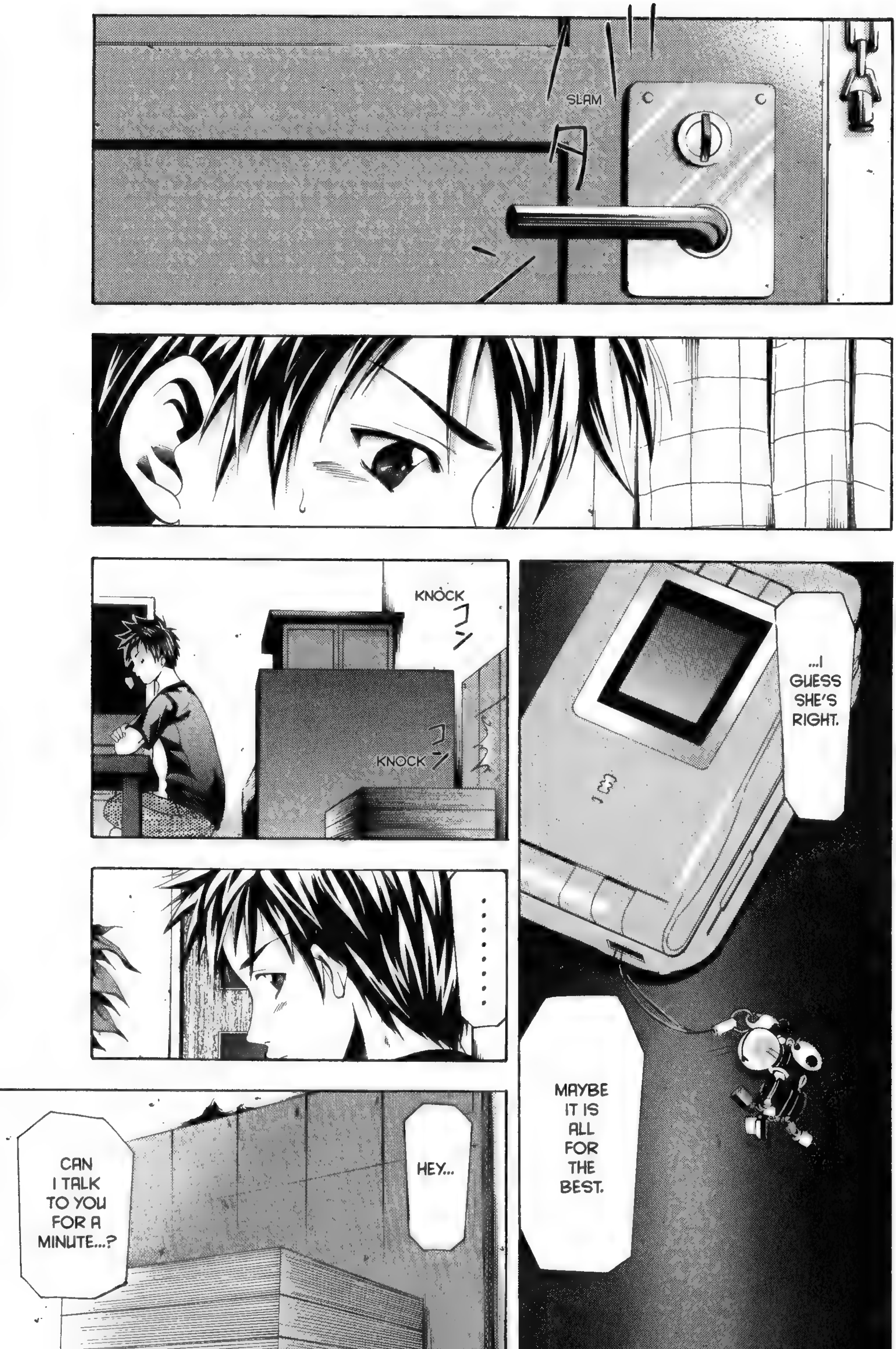

YOU ARE SUCH AN IDIOT
WHO WOULD BREAK UP WITH SUCH A NICE GIRL?
...I KNOW, I KNOW...
YOU KNOW? REALLY?
AN ASSHOLE LIKE YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND ANOTHER GIRL LIKE HER.
CRUSH
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GOOD LOOKING OR RICH OR ANYTHING...
I WOULDN'T EVEN GIVE YOU THE TIME OF DAY.
......

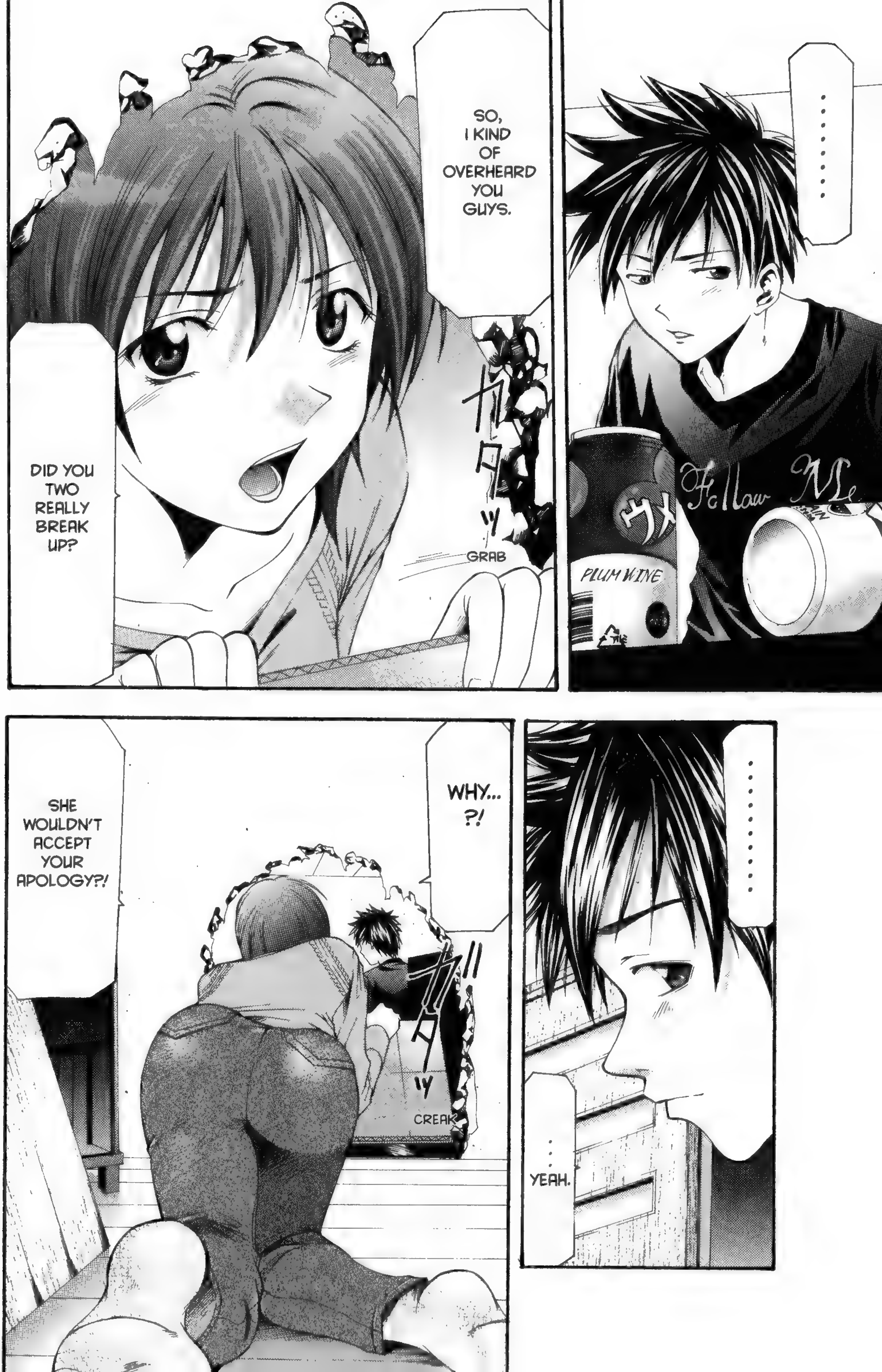

OH, LOOK AT THAT FACE, WHAT'RE YOU GONNA CRY NOW?
COME ON, SAOTOME-SAN, QUIT TEASING HIM LIKE THAT.
OH MY GOD! JUST LOOK AT HIS FACE!
......
STOP IT, SAOTOME-SAN!
IT'S OVER, ALL RIGHT! SO JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!!
... YAMATO-KUN.
W-WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
DID HE BREAK UP.. WITH HONOKA-CHAN?

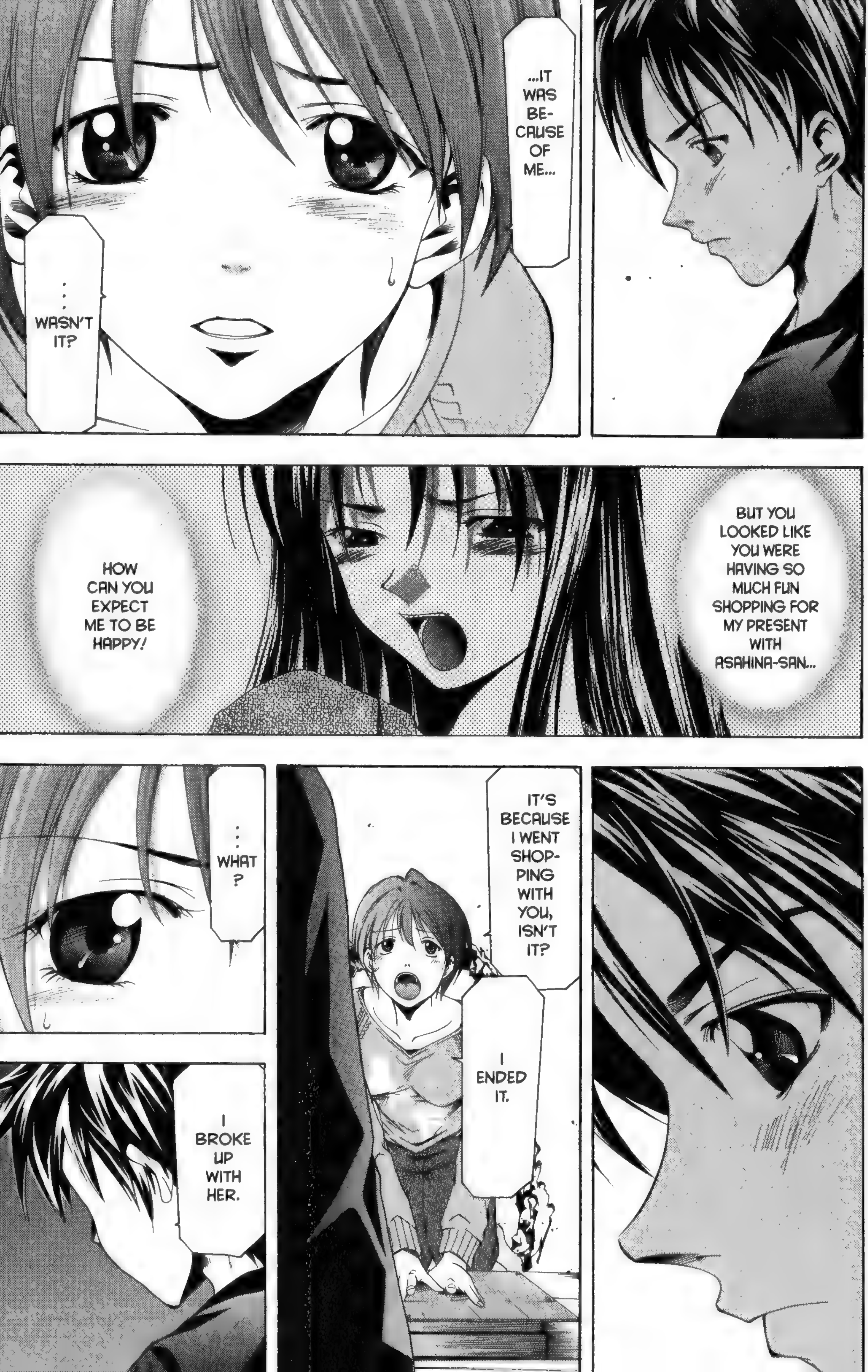
チッ TICK
TOCK
チッ
TICK チッ
PLUM WINE
PLUNK
WHAT KIND OF AN ATTITUDE IS THAT!!
...I KNOW
SORRY...
...HUH?
ガン POUND
ガン POUND
YOU MIGHT BE READY, BUT MAYBE SHE WASN'T READY! EVER THINK OF THAT?
HUH?!
READY? READY FOR WHAT?
SAGAI ORIGINAL

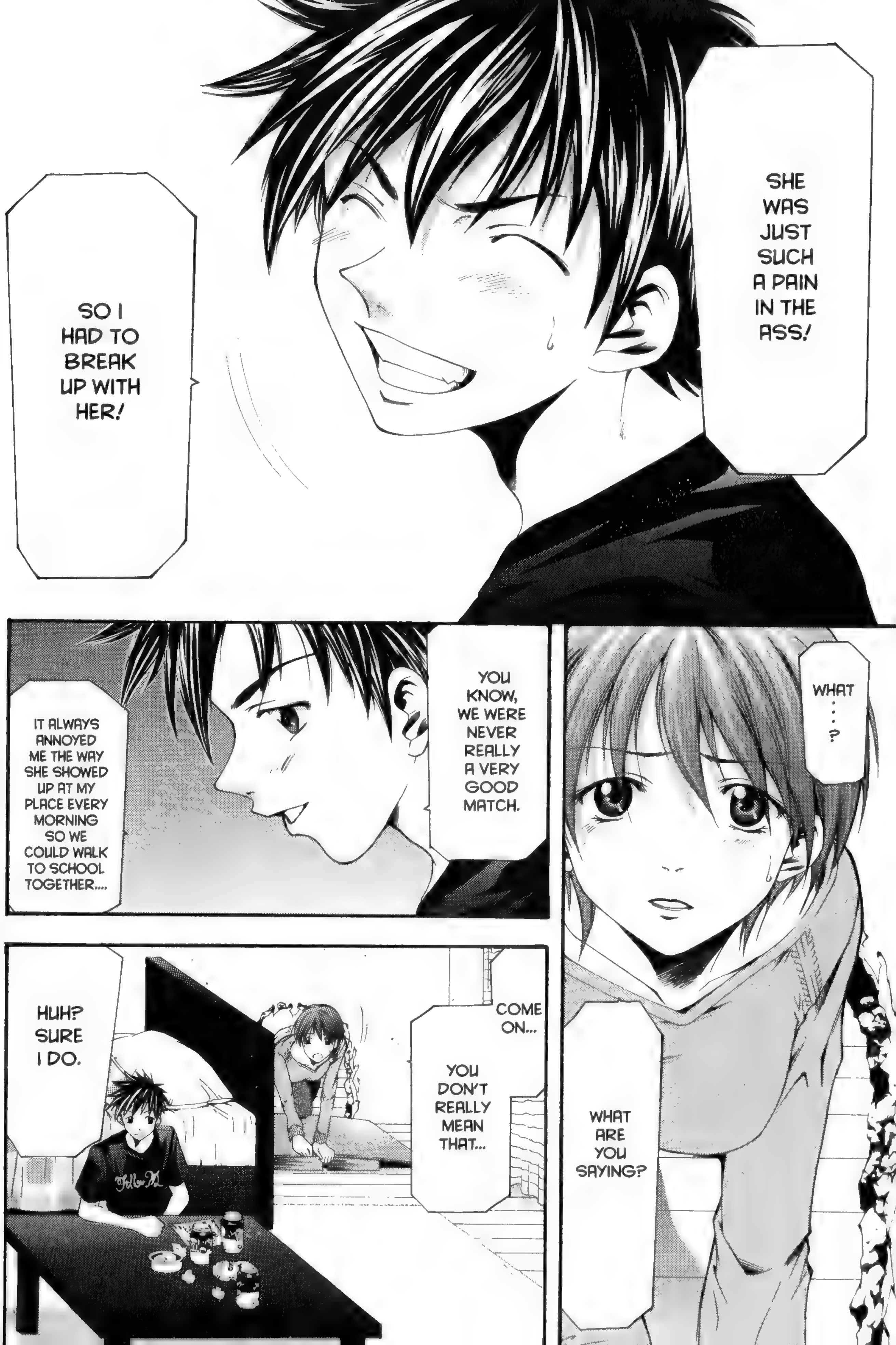

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
ドッ
SMACK
Y-YEAH, I'M LISTENING!!
HMMPH, MEN...
ALL THEY THINK ABOUT IS GETTING LAID!!
AND WHEN YOU SAY NO, THEY LOOK AT YOU LIKE "WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, BITCH"...
ブスッ
POKE
ブスッ
POKE
......
UM...
IF YOU DO THAT...
YOU'RE NEVER GONNA USE IT ANYWAY!!
SMACK
AND THEN THEY'RE LIKE "IT'S OKAY, BABY. I'LL WEAR A RUBBER."
LIKE THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I SAID NO!!
オロローン
PA-LUNK
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH BOOZE FOR YOU...
......

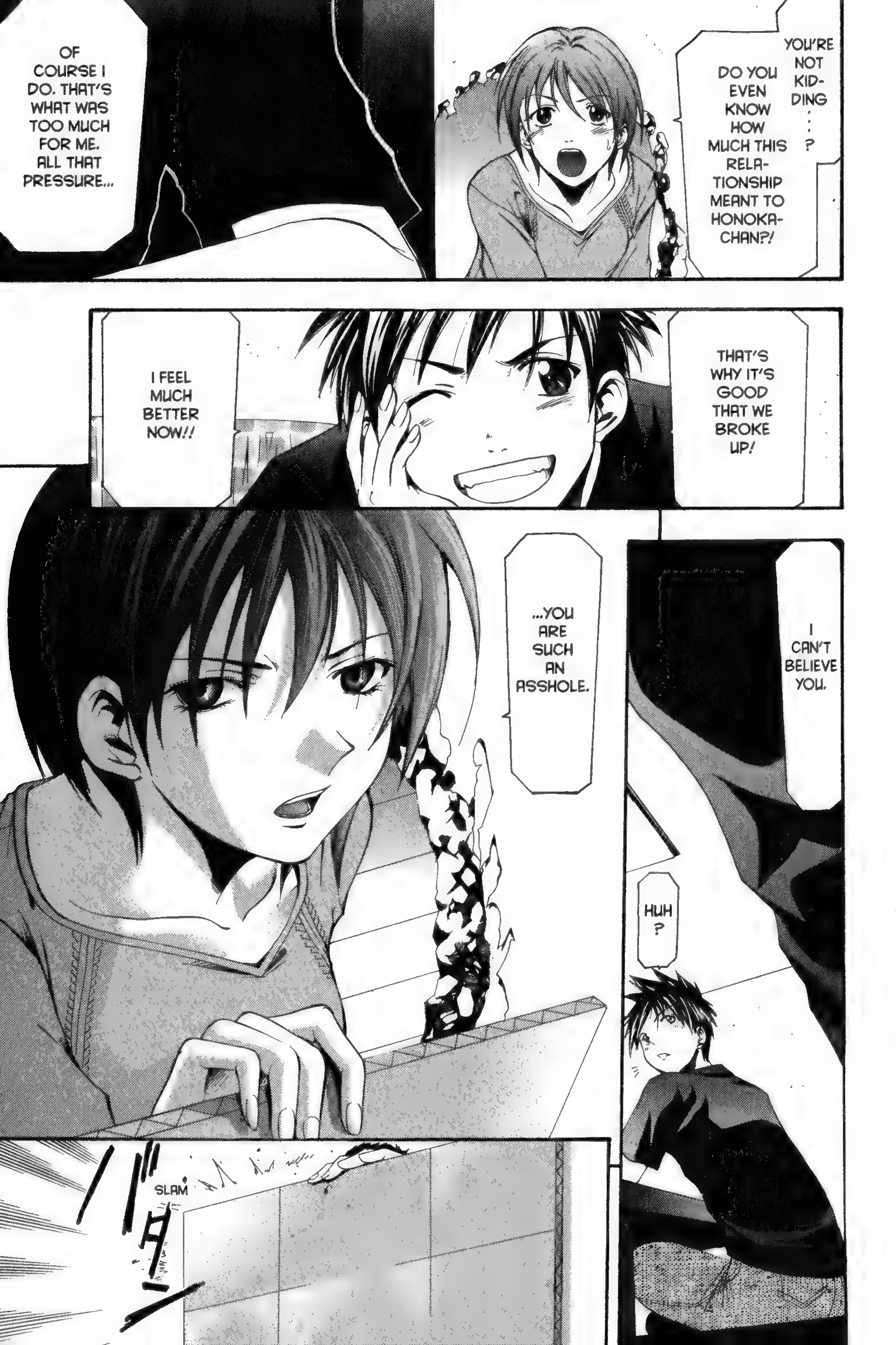

ウメ
PLUM WINE
COME ON, MEGUMI-CHAN. LET'S GO HOME.
SNIFF SNIFF WAH-HHH!
...WELL, SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS ALL FOR THE BEST.
... WHAT?
WHY BOTHER KEEPING UP A HALF-ASSED RELATIONSHIP...
... BETTER TO JUST END IT...
CLICK ガチャ
...WELL, IT'S REALLY NONE OF MY BUSINESS. IT'S YOUR PROBLEM, NOT MINE.
GOOD NIGHT.

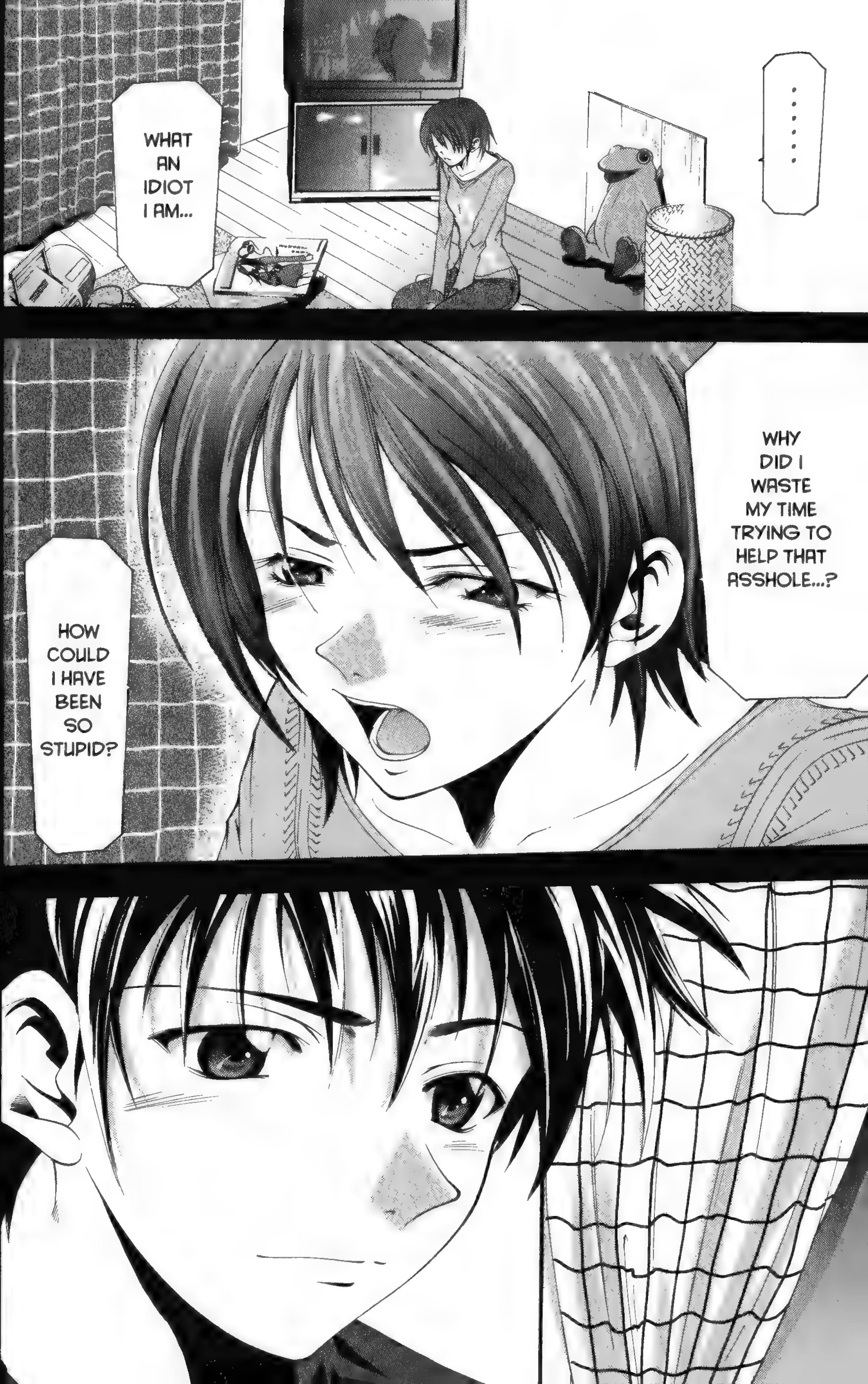

SLAM
...I GUESS SHE'S RIGHT.
MAYBE IT IS ALL FOR THE BEST.
KNOCK
コン
KNOCK
コン
......
HEY...
CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE...?

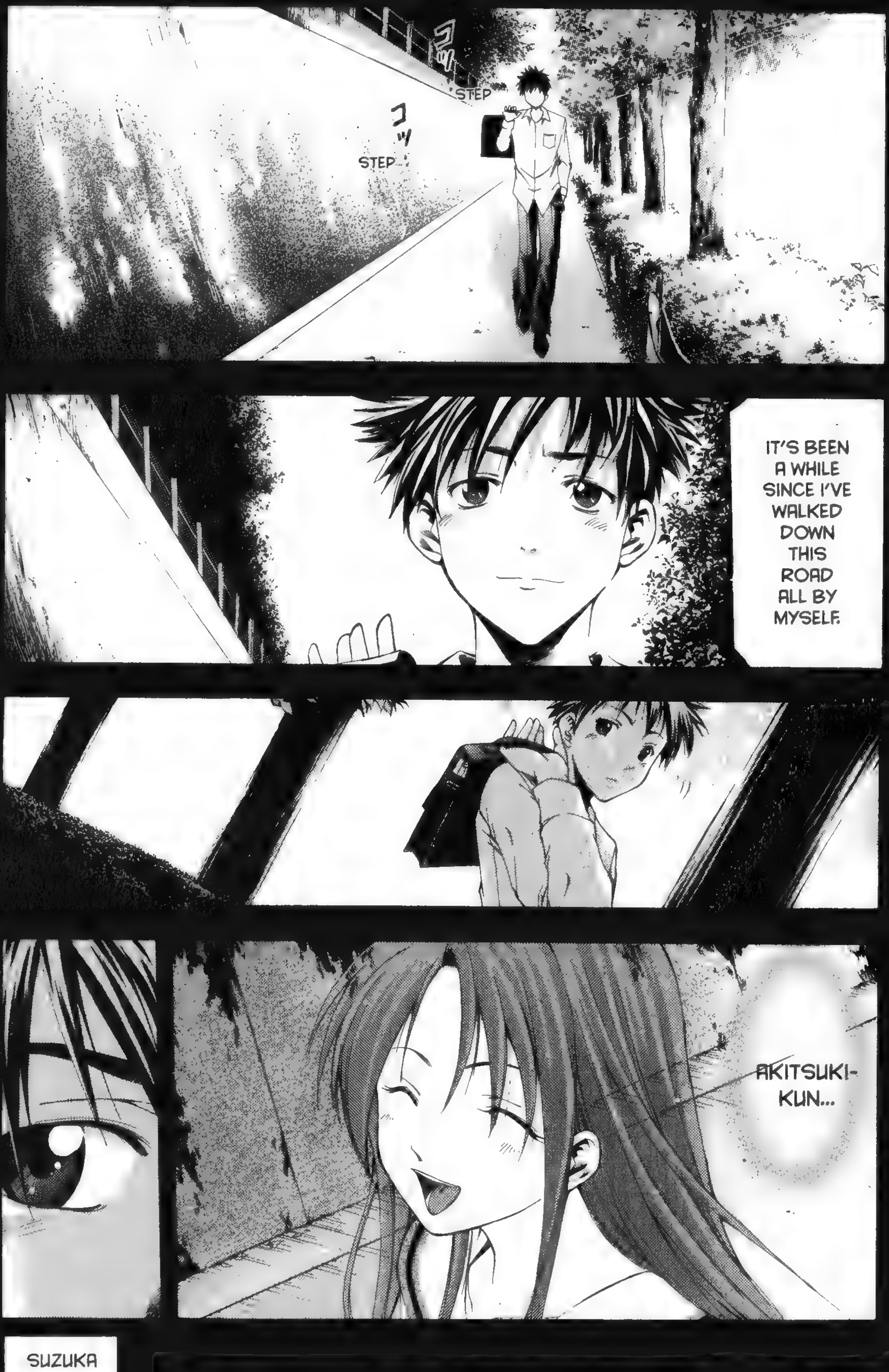

....
Fallow Me
PLUM WINE
SO, I KIND OF OVERHEARD YOU GUYS.
GRAB
DID YOU TWO REALLY BREAK UP?
....
... YEAH.
WHY...?!
CREAK
SHE WOULDN'T ACCEPT YOUR APOLOGY?!

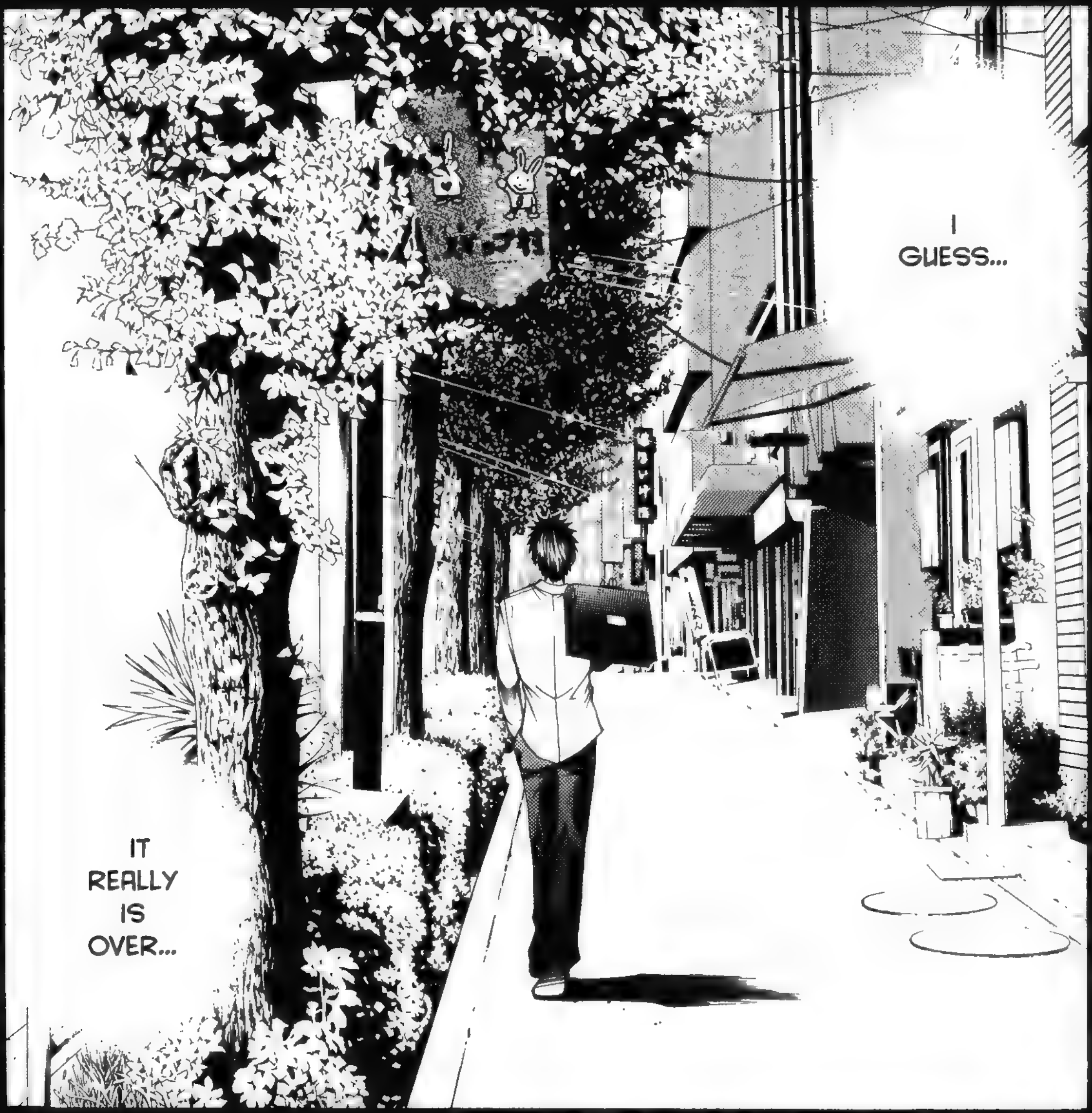

...IT WAS BECAUSE OF ME...
...WASN'T IT?
BUT YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE HAVING SO MUCH FUN SHOPPING FOR MY PRESENT WITH ASAHINA-SAN...
HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO BE HAPPY!
IT'S BECAUSE I WENT SHOPPING WITH YOU, ISN'T IT?
I ENDED IT.
...WHAT?
I BROKE UP WITH HER.


SHE WAS JUST SUCH A PAIN IN THE ASS!
SO I HAD TO BREAK UP WITH HER!
WHAT...?
YOU KNOW, WE WERE NEVER REALLY A VERY GOOD MATCH.
IT ALWAYS ANNOYED ME THE WAY SHE SHOWED UP AT MY PLACE EVERY MORNING SO WE COULD WALK TO SCHOOL TOGETHER....
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
COME ON...
YOU DON'T REALLY MEAN THAT...
HUH? SURE I DO.


YOU'RE NOT KIDDING...?
DO YOU EVEN KNOW HOW MUCH THIS RELATIONSHIP MEANT TO HONOKA-CHAN?!
OF COURSE I DO. THAT'S WHAT WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME. ALL THAT PRESSURE...
THAT'S WHY IT'S GOOD THAT WE BROKE UP!
I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU.
...YOU ARE SUCH AN ASSHOLE.
HUH?
SLAM

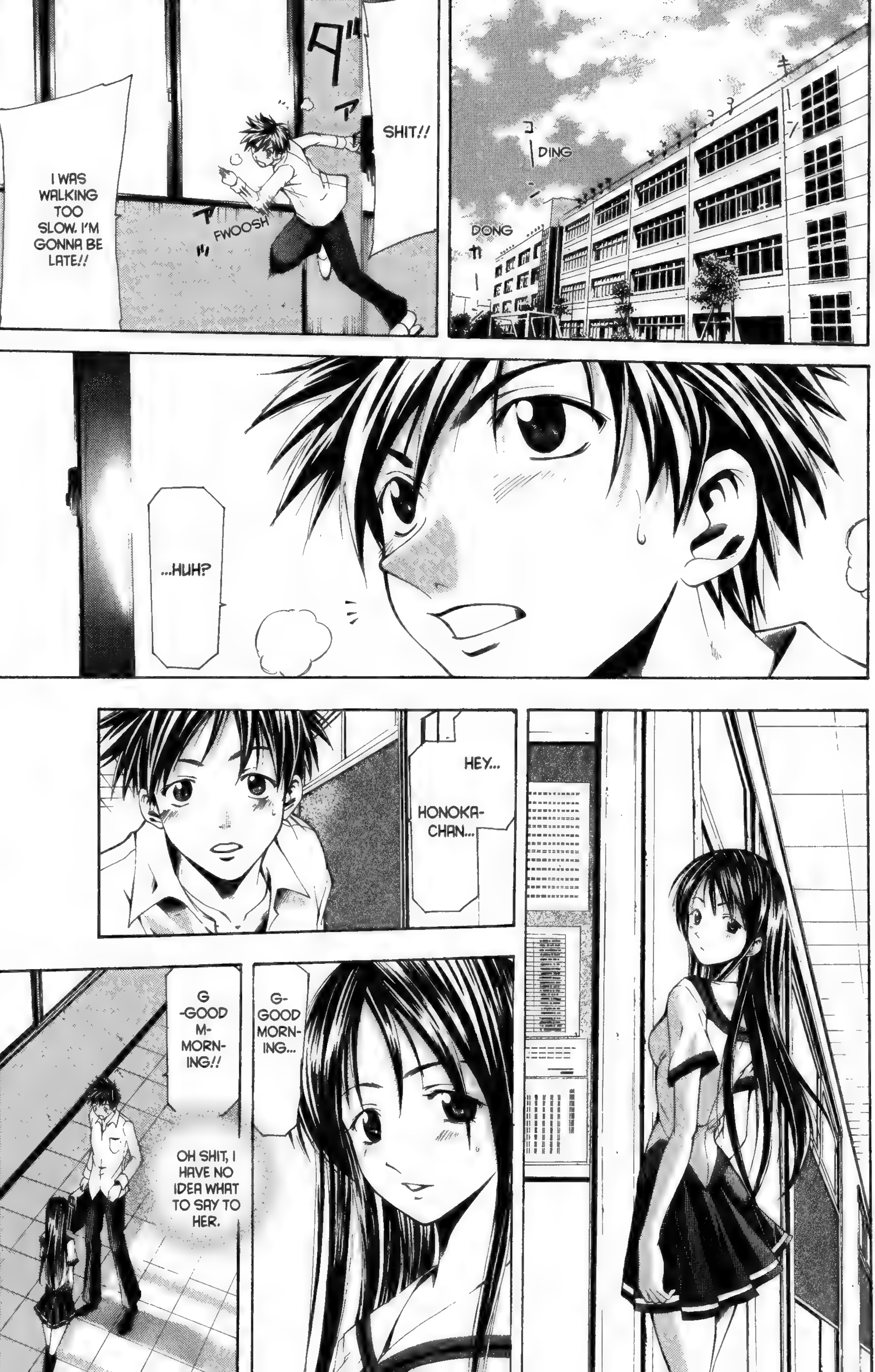

......
WHAT AN IDIOT I AM...
WHY DID I WASTE MY TIME TRYING TO HELP THAT ASSHOLE...?
HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO STUPID?

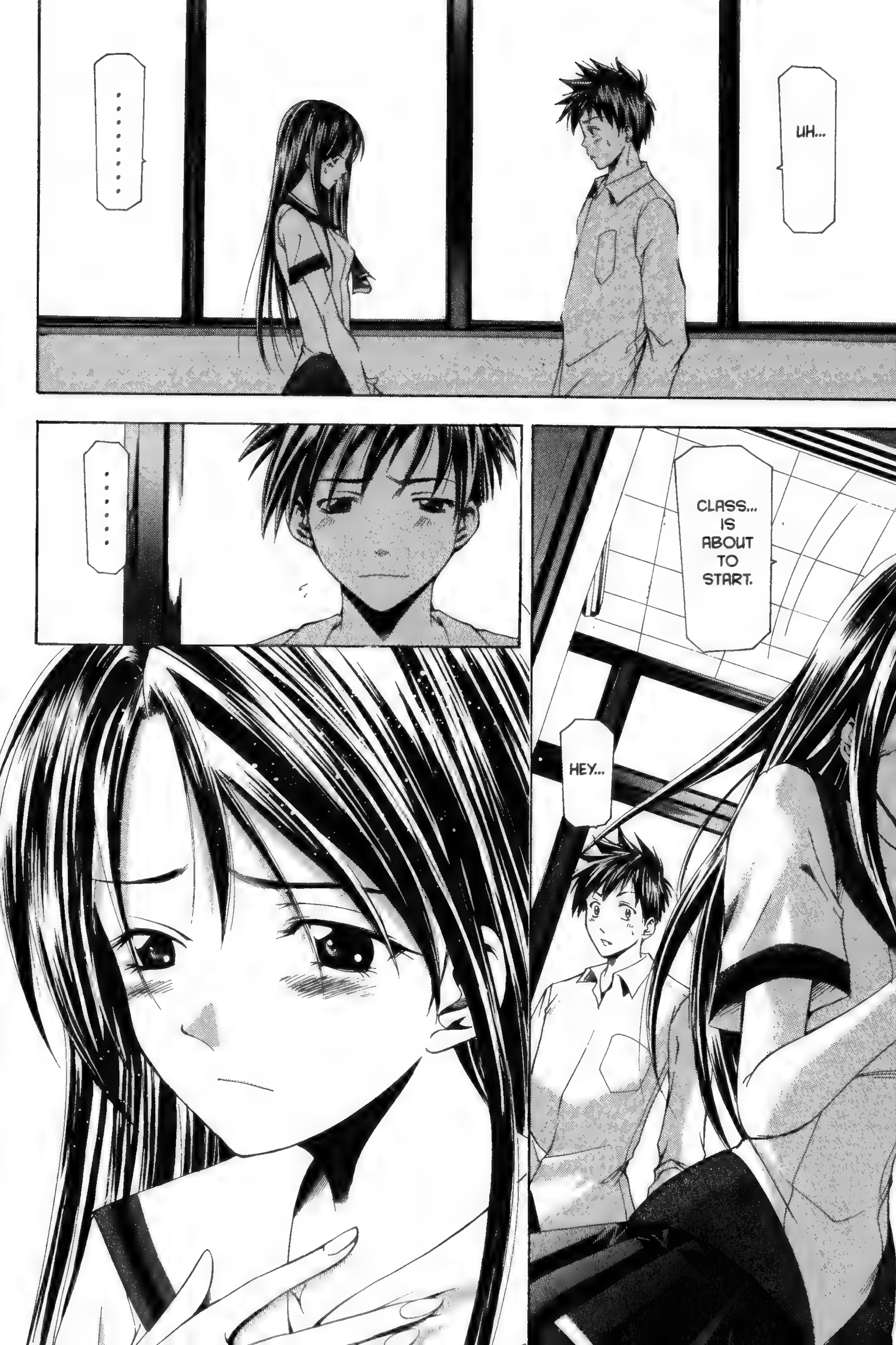

コッ
STEP
コッ
STEP...
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE WALKED DOWN THIS ROAD ALL BY MYSELF.
AKITSUKI-KUN...
SUZUKA

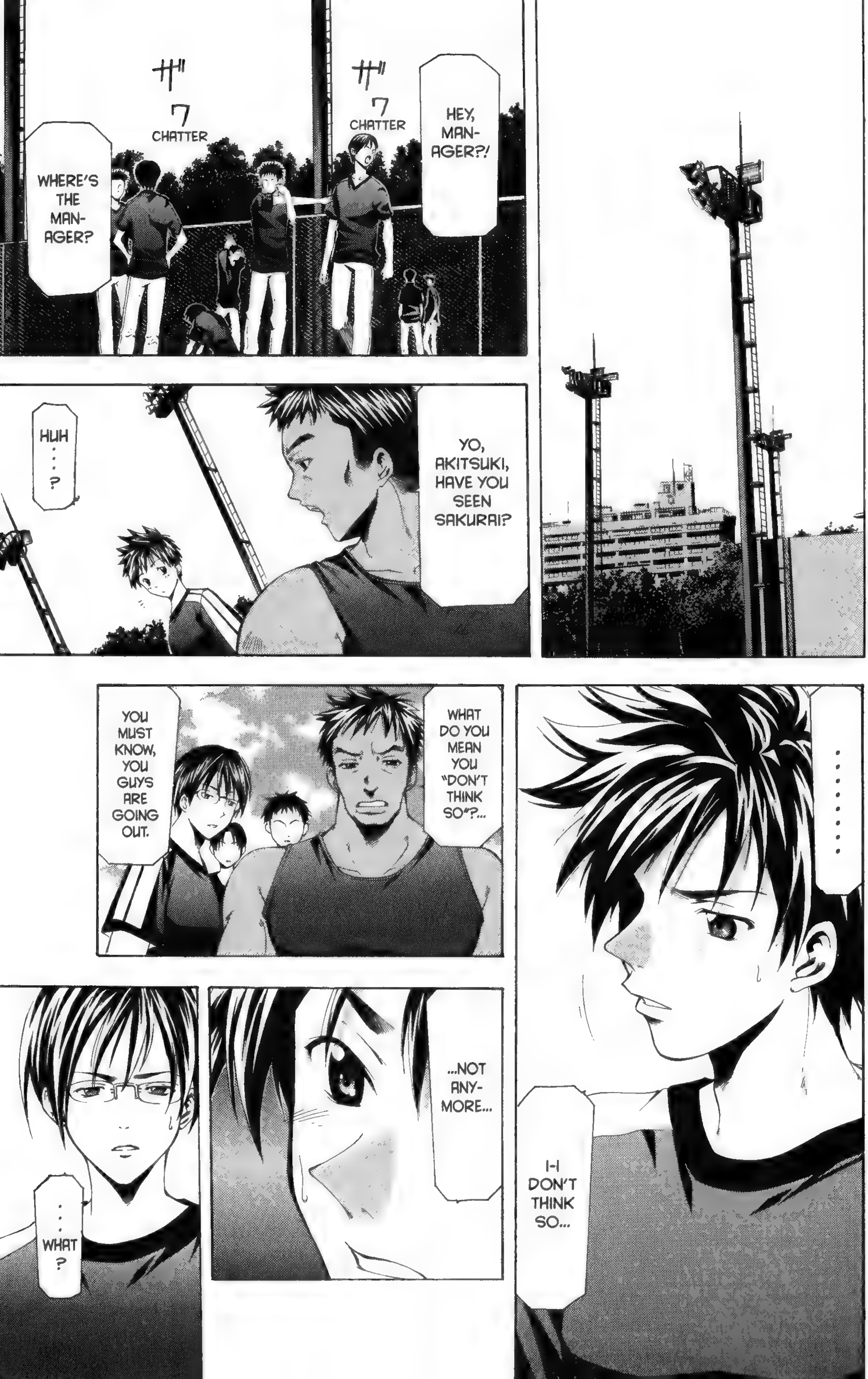

I GUESS...
IT REALLY IS OVER...

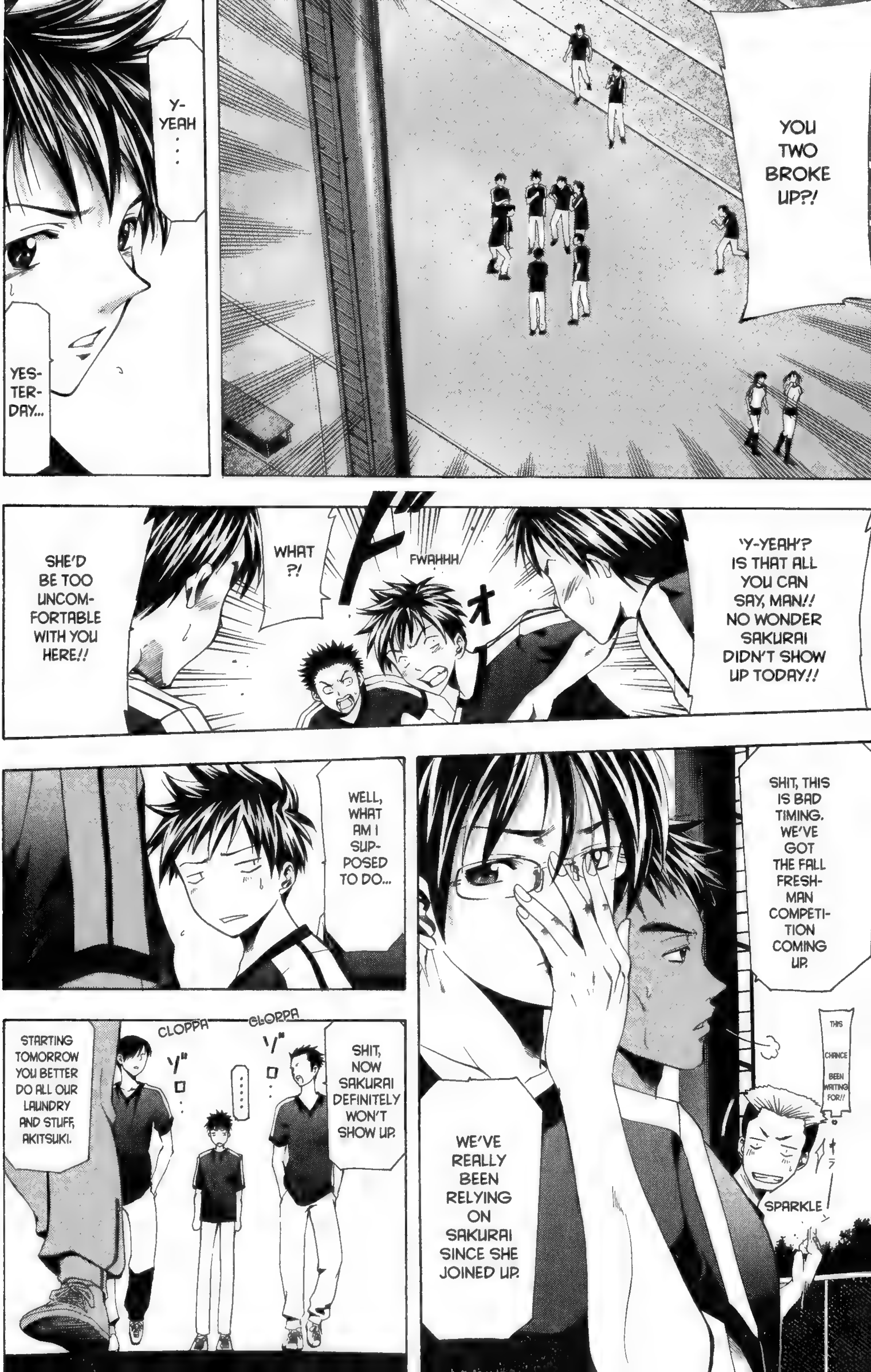
SUZUKA

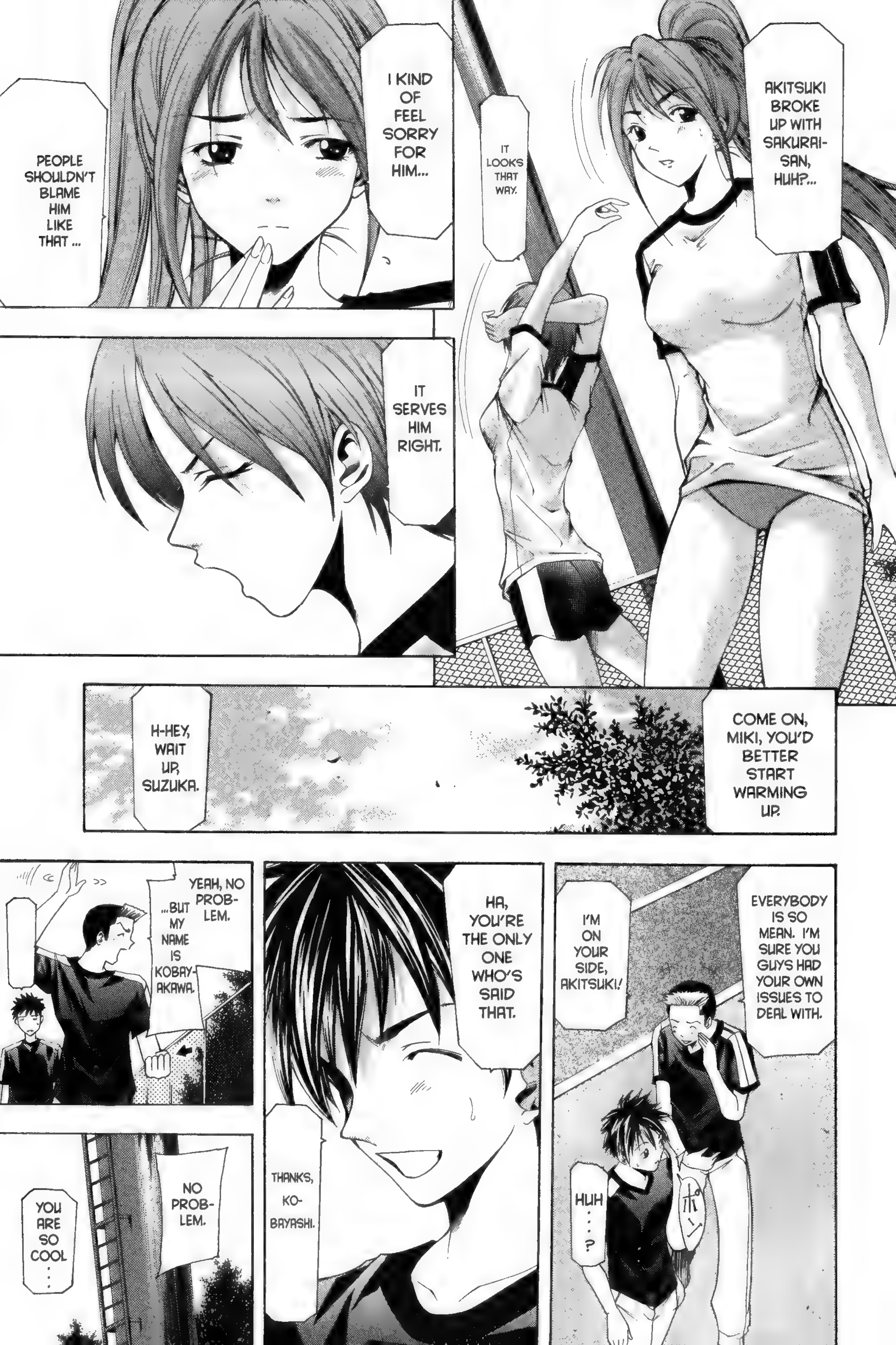
#54 DECISION

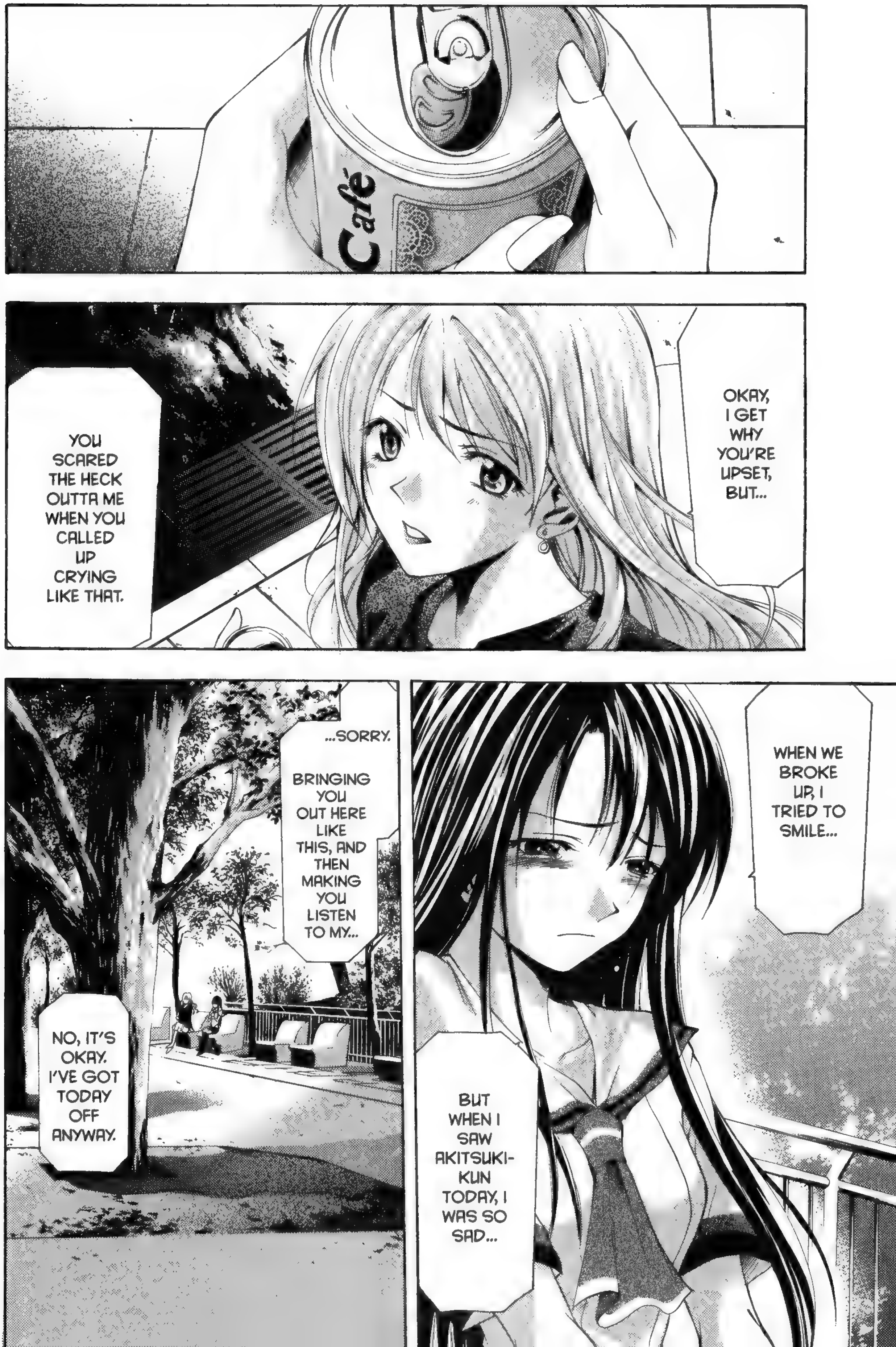

DING
DONG
SHIT!!
FWOOSH
I WAS WALKING TOO SLOW. I'M GONNA BE LATE!!
...HUH?
HEY...
HONOKA-CHAN...
G-GOOD MORNING...
G-GOOD M-MORNING!!
OH SHIT, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO SAY TO HER.

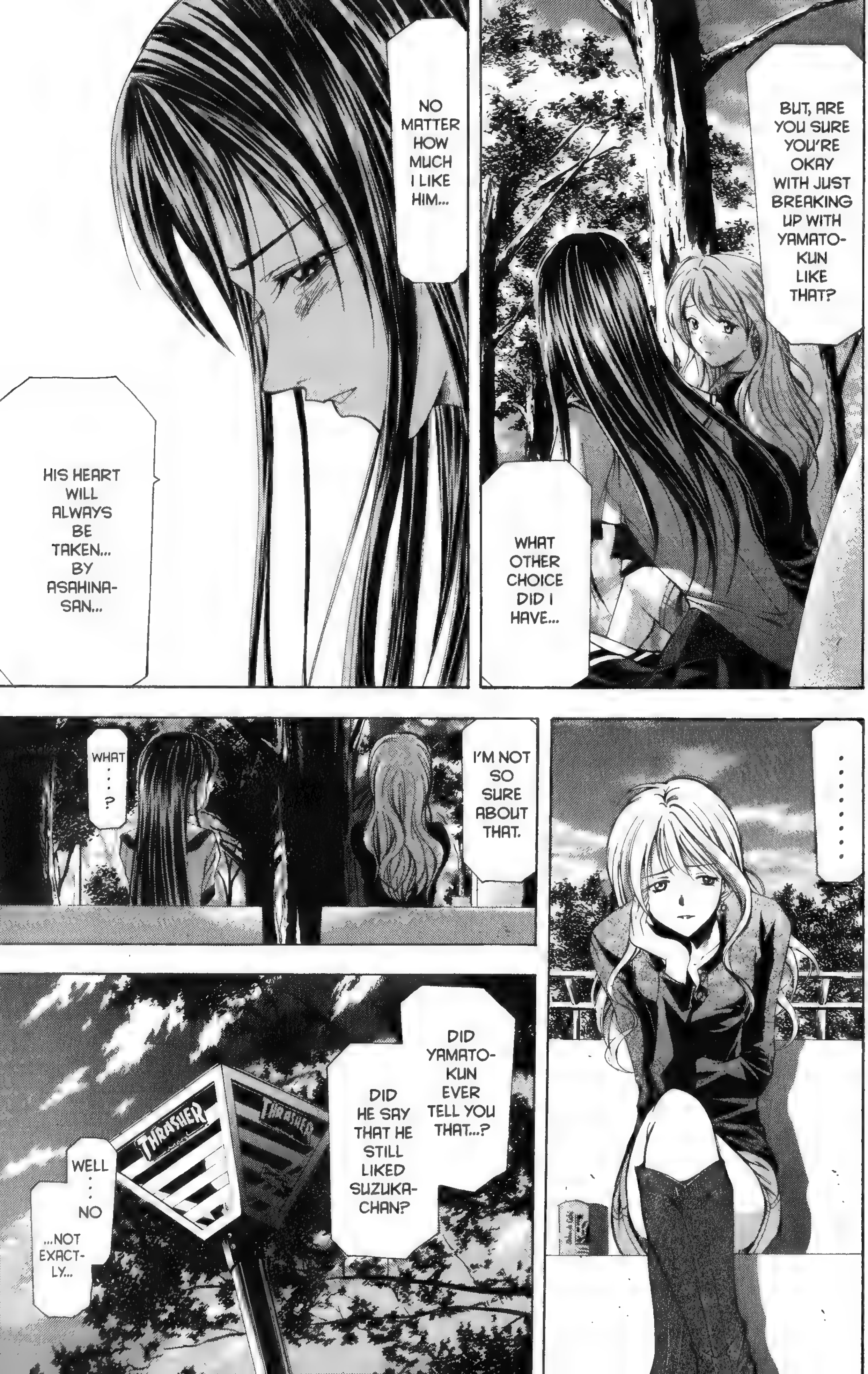

UH...
....
CLASS... IS ABOUT TO START.
HEY...
......

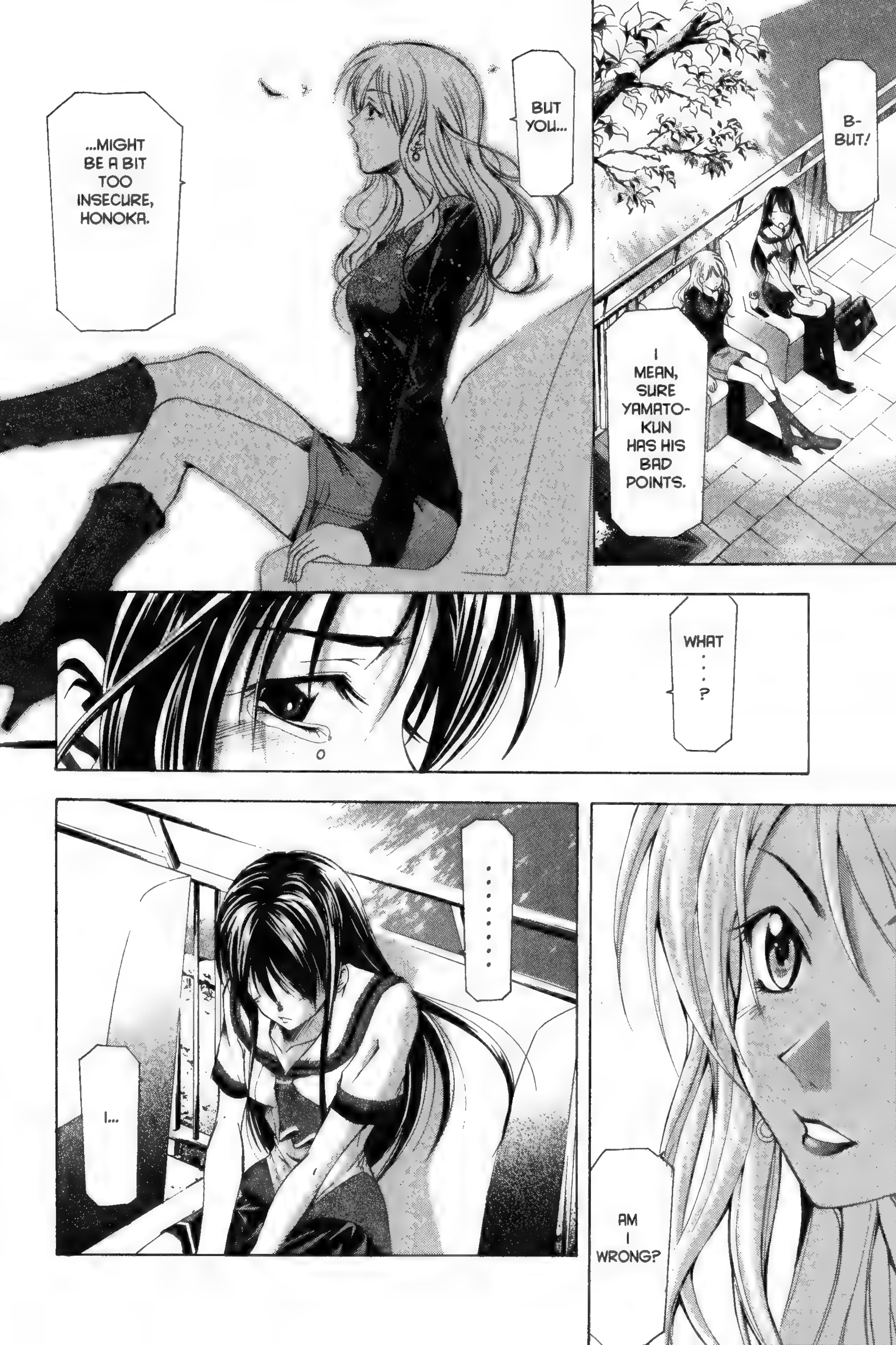

HEY, MANAGER?!
ザワ CHATTER
ザワ CHATTER
WHERE'S THE MANAGER?
YO, AKITSUKI, HAVE YOU SEEN SAKURAI?
HUH...?
....
I-I DON'T THINK SO...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU "DON'T THINK SO"?...
YOU MUST KNOW, YOU GUYS ARE GOING OUT.
...NOT ANYMORE...
...WHAT?

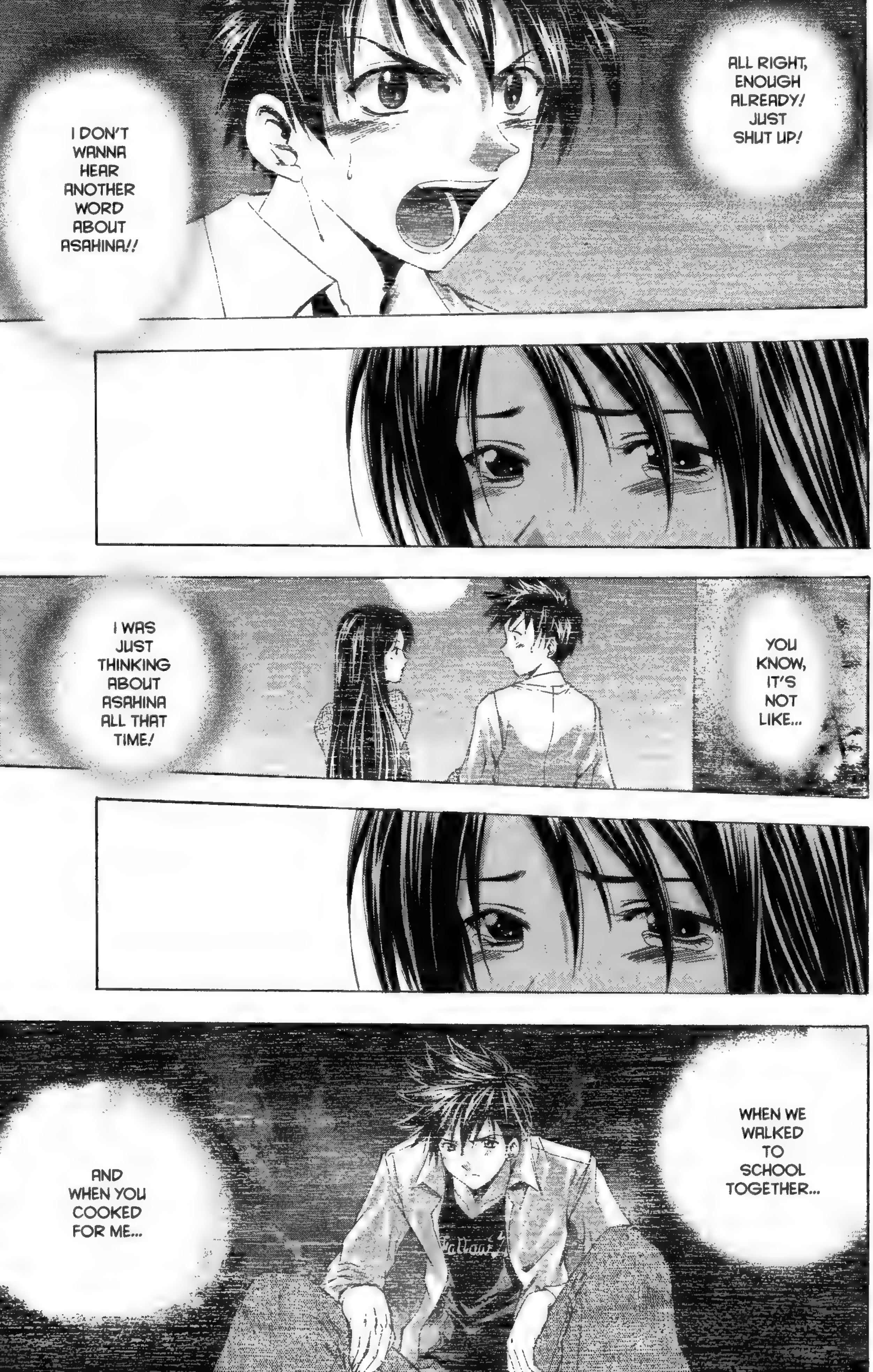

YOU TWO BROKE UP?!
Y-YEAH...
YESTERDAY...
'Y-YEAH'? IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY, MAN!! NO WONDER SAKURAI DIDN'T SHOW UP TODAY!!
FWAHHH
WHAT?!
SHE'D BE TOO UNCOMFORTABLE WITH YOU HERE!!
SHIT, THIS IS BAD TIMING. WE'VE GOT THE FALL FRESHMAN COMPETITION COMING UP.
THIS CHANCE BEEN WRITING FOR!!
SPARKLE
WE'VE REALLY BEEN RELYING ON SAKURAI SINCE SHE JOINED UP.
WELL, WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...
SHIT, NOW SAKURAI DEFINITELY WON'T SHOW UP.
CLOPPA
.....
CLOPPA
STARTING TOMORROW YOU BETTER DO ALL OUR LAUNDRY AND STUFF, AKITSUKI.

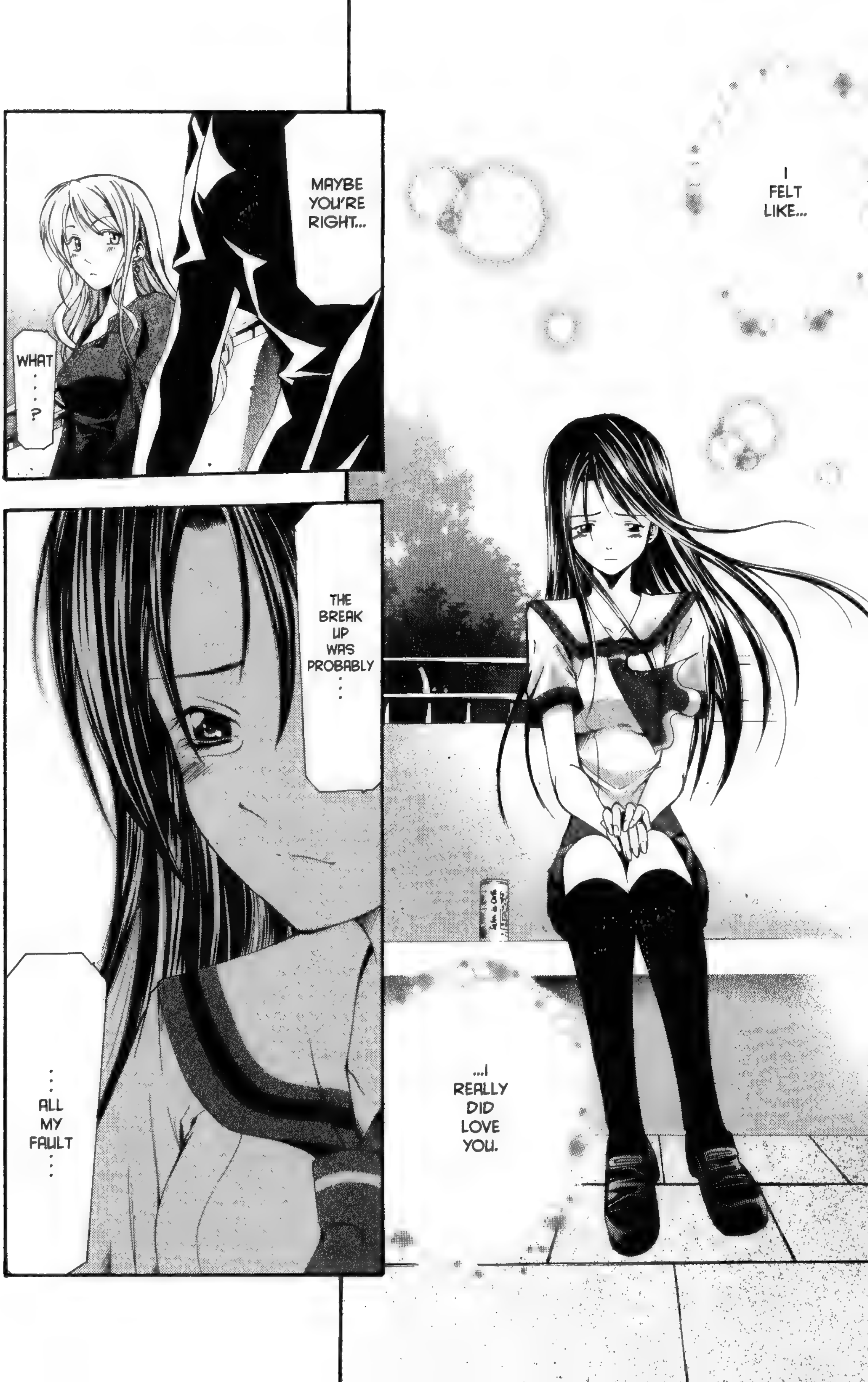

AKITSUKI BROKE UP WITH SAKURAI-SAN, HUH?...
IT LOOKS THAT WAY.
I KIND OF FEEL SORRY FOR HIM...
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BLAME HIM LIKE THAT ...
IT SERVES HIM RIGHT.
COME ON, MIKI, YOU'D BETTER START WARMING UP.
H-HEY, WAIT UP, SUZUKA.
EVERYBODY IS SO MEAN. I'M SURE YOU GUYS HAD YOUR OWN ISSUES TO DEAL WITH.
I'M ON YOUR SIDE, AKITSUKI!
ポン
HUH...?
HA, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S SAID THAT.
THANKS, KOBAYASHI.
YEAH, NO PROBLEM.
...BUT MY NAME IS KOBAYAKAWA.
NO PROBLEM.
YOU ARE SO COOL...

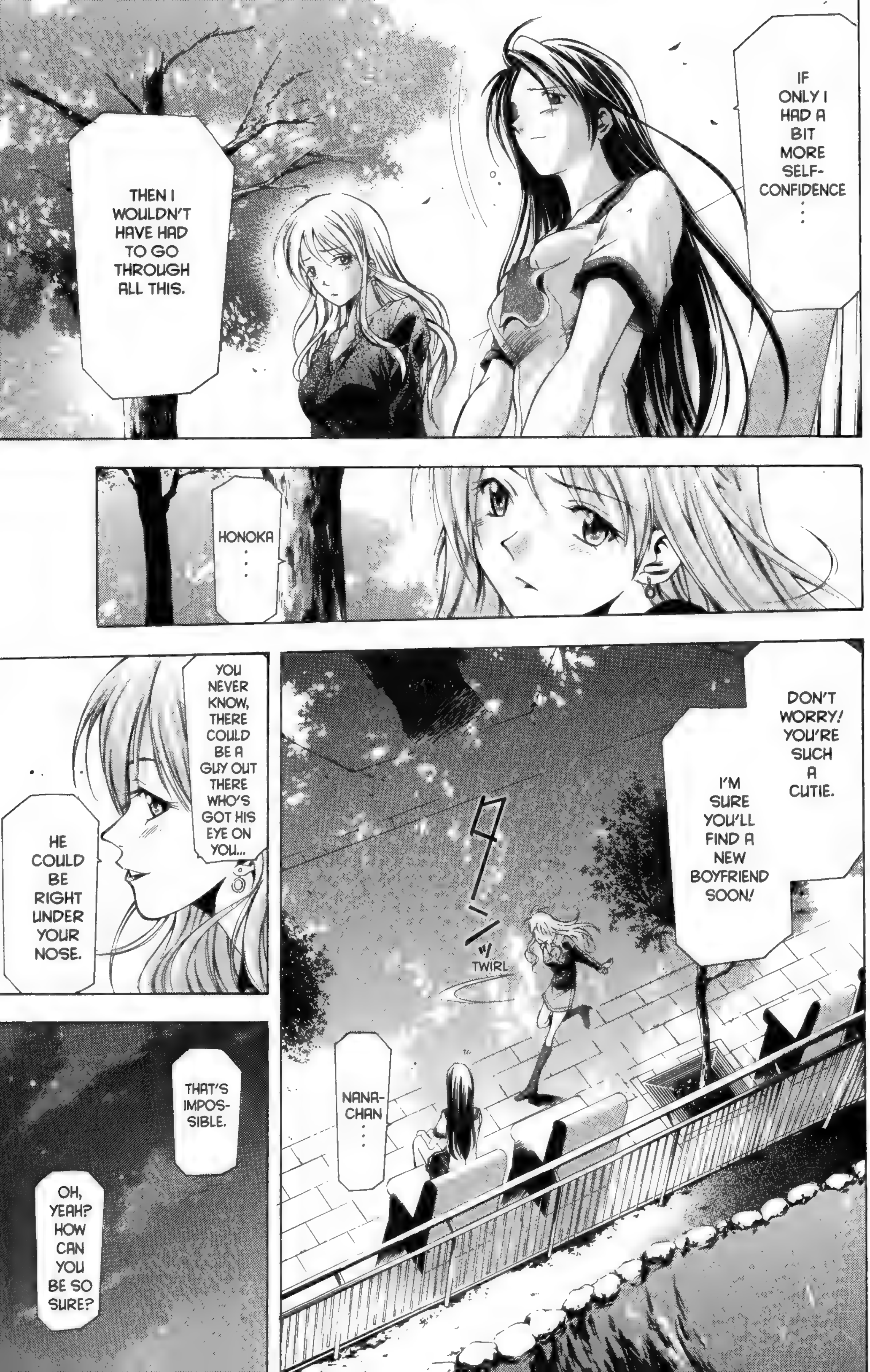

Café
OKAY, I GET WHY YOU'RE UPSET, BUT...
YOU SCARED THE HECK OUTTA ME WHEN YOU CALLED UP CRYING LIKE THAT.
WHEN WE BROKE UP, I TRIED TO SMILE...
BUT WHEN I SAW AKITSUKI-KUN TODAY, I WAS SO SAD...
...SORRY.
BRINGING YOU OUT HERE LIKE THIS, AND THEN MAKING YOU LISTEN TO MY...
NO, IT'S OKAY. I'VE GOT TODAY OFF ANYWAY.

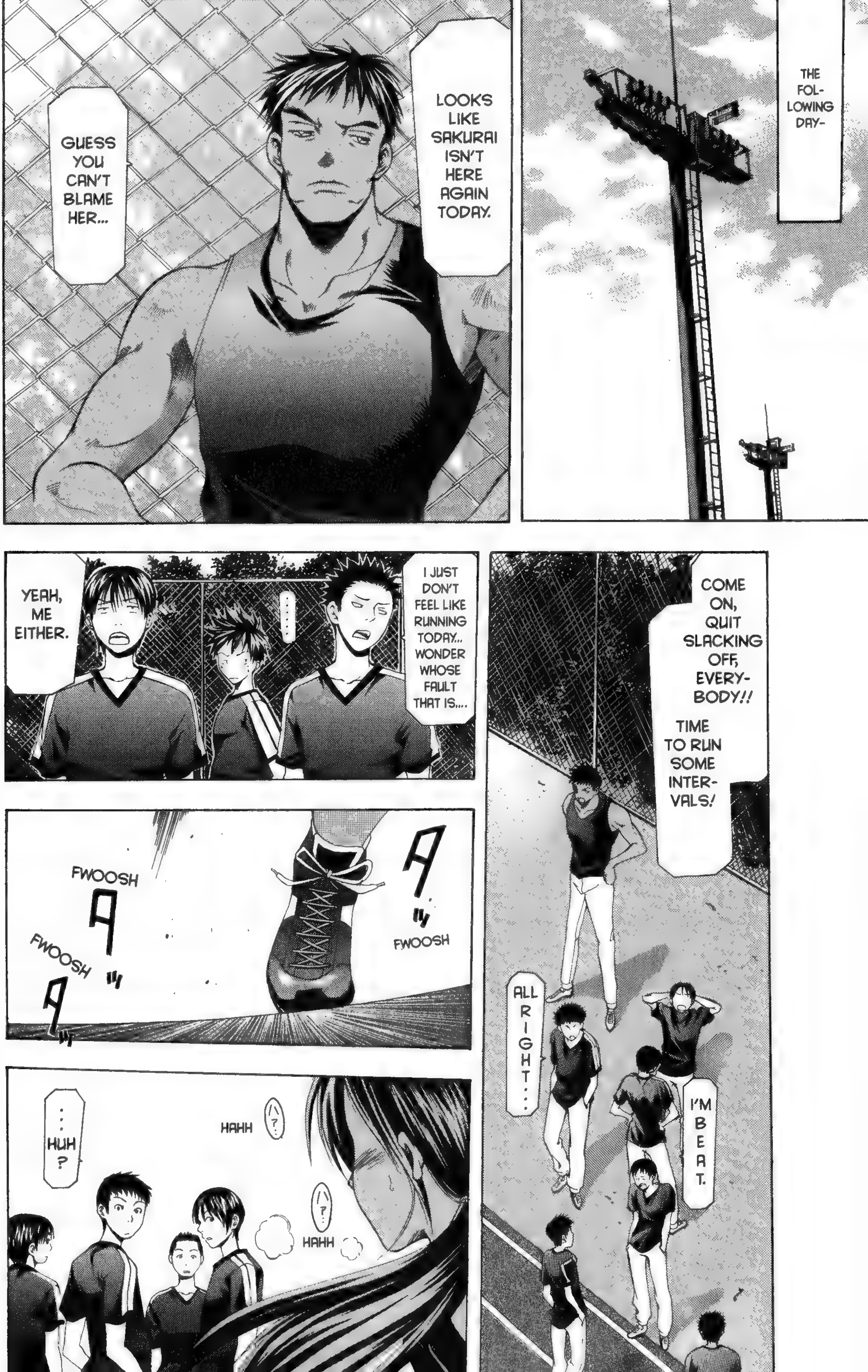

BUT, ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY WITH JUST BREAKING UP WITH YAMATO-KUN LIKE THAT?
WHAT OTHER CHOICE DID I HAVE...
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I LIKE HIM...
HIS HEART WILL ALWAYS BE TAKEN... BY ASAHINA-SAN...
....
I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THAT.
WHAT...?
DID YAMATO-KUN EVER TELL YOU THAT...?
DID HE SAY THAT HE STILL LIKED SUZUKA-CHAN?
WELL... NO
...NOT EXACTLY...
THRASHER
THRASHER

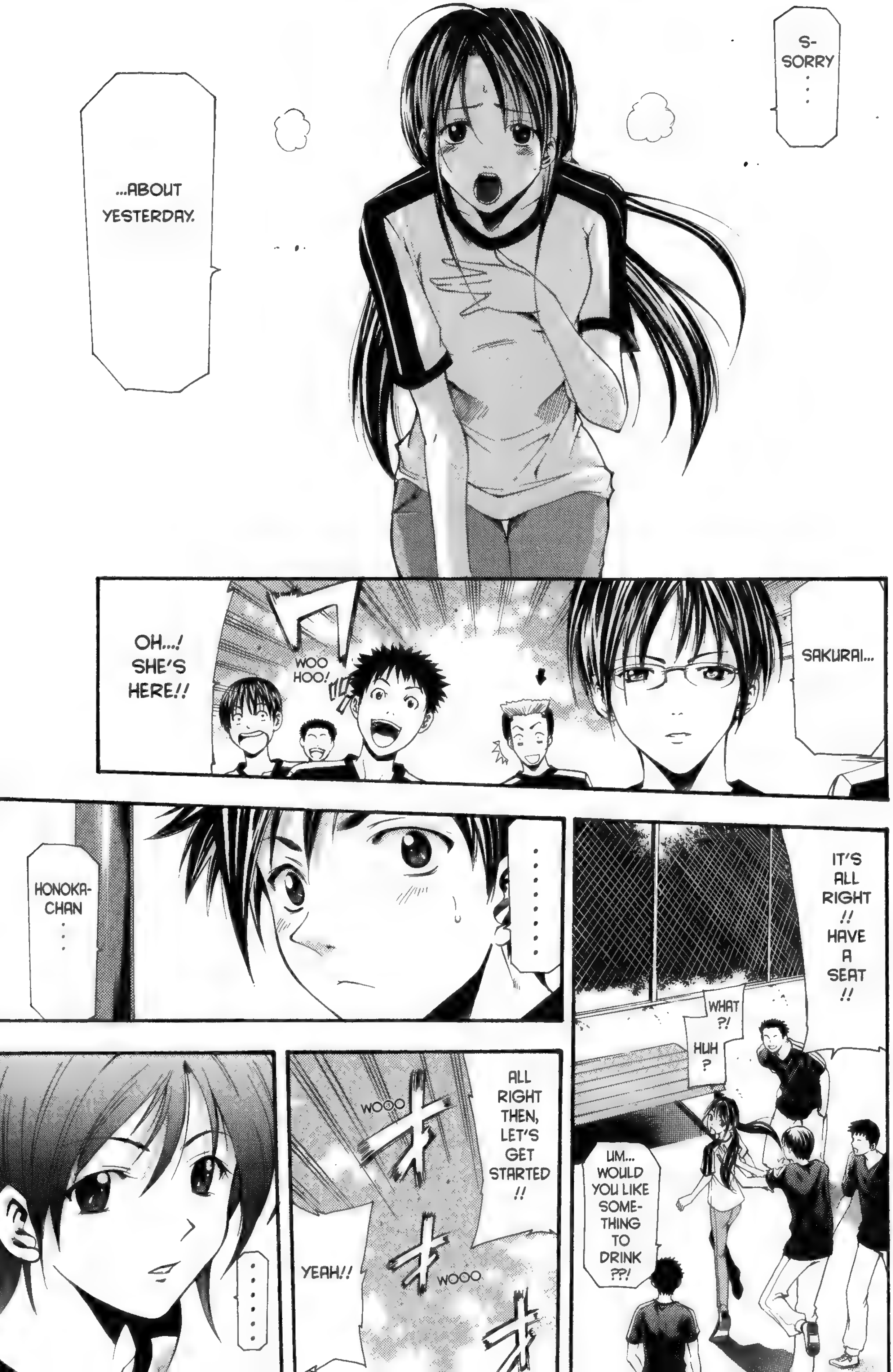

B-BUT!
I MEAN, SURE YAMATO-KUN HAS HIS BAD POINTS.
BUT YOU...
...MIGHT BE A BIT TOO INSECURE, HONOKA.
WHAT . . . ?
AM I WRONG?
....
I...

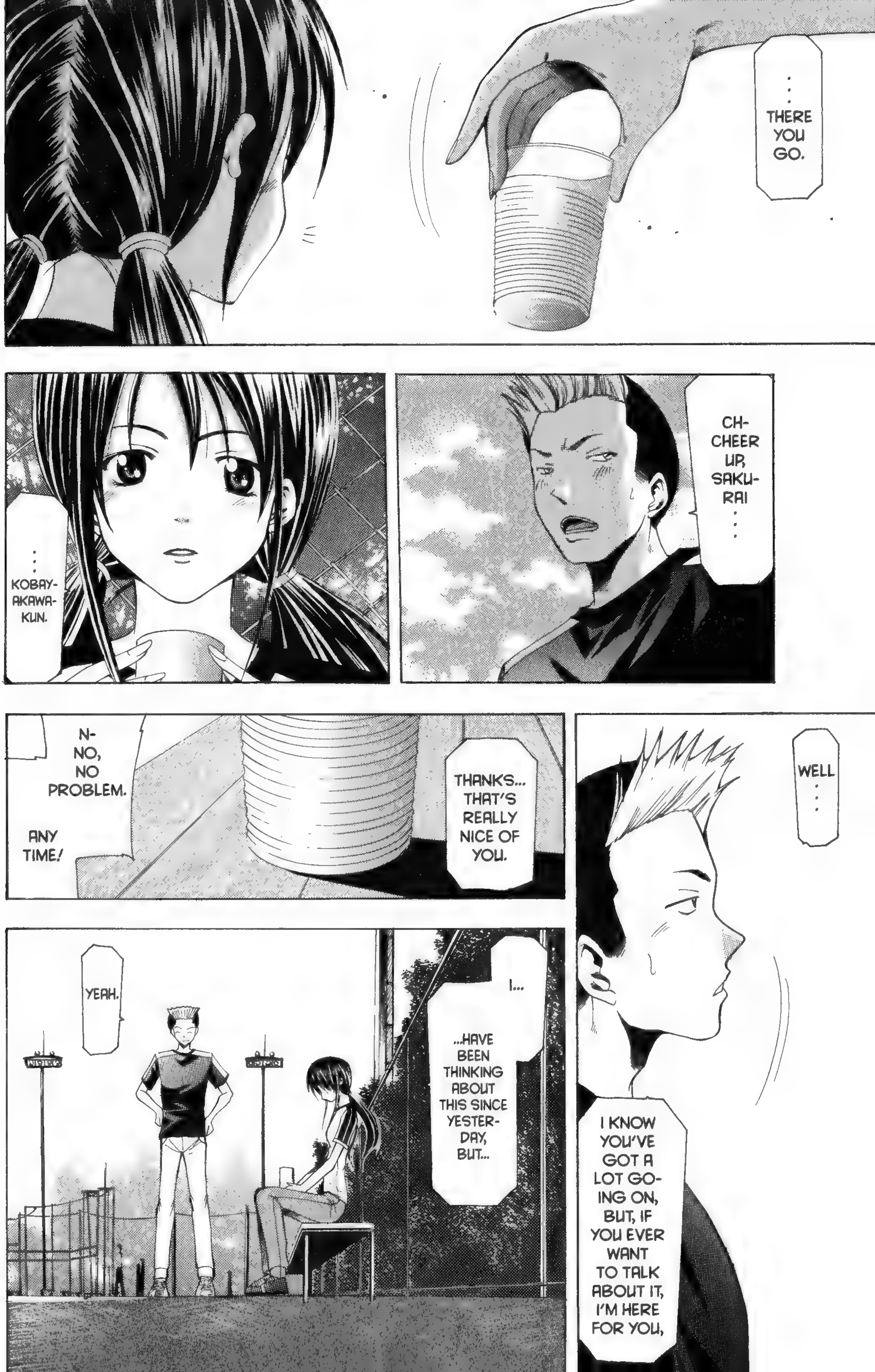

ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH ALREADY! JUST SHUT UP!
I DON'T WANNA HEAR ANOTHER WORD ABOUT ASAHINA!!
YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT LIKE...
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT ASAHINA ALL THAT TIME!
WHEN WE WALKED TO SCHOOL TOGETHER...
AND WHEN YOU COOKED FOR ME...

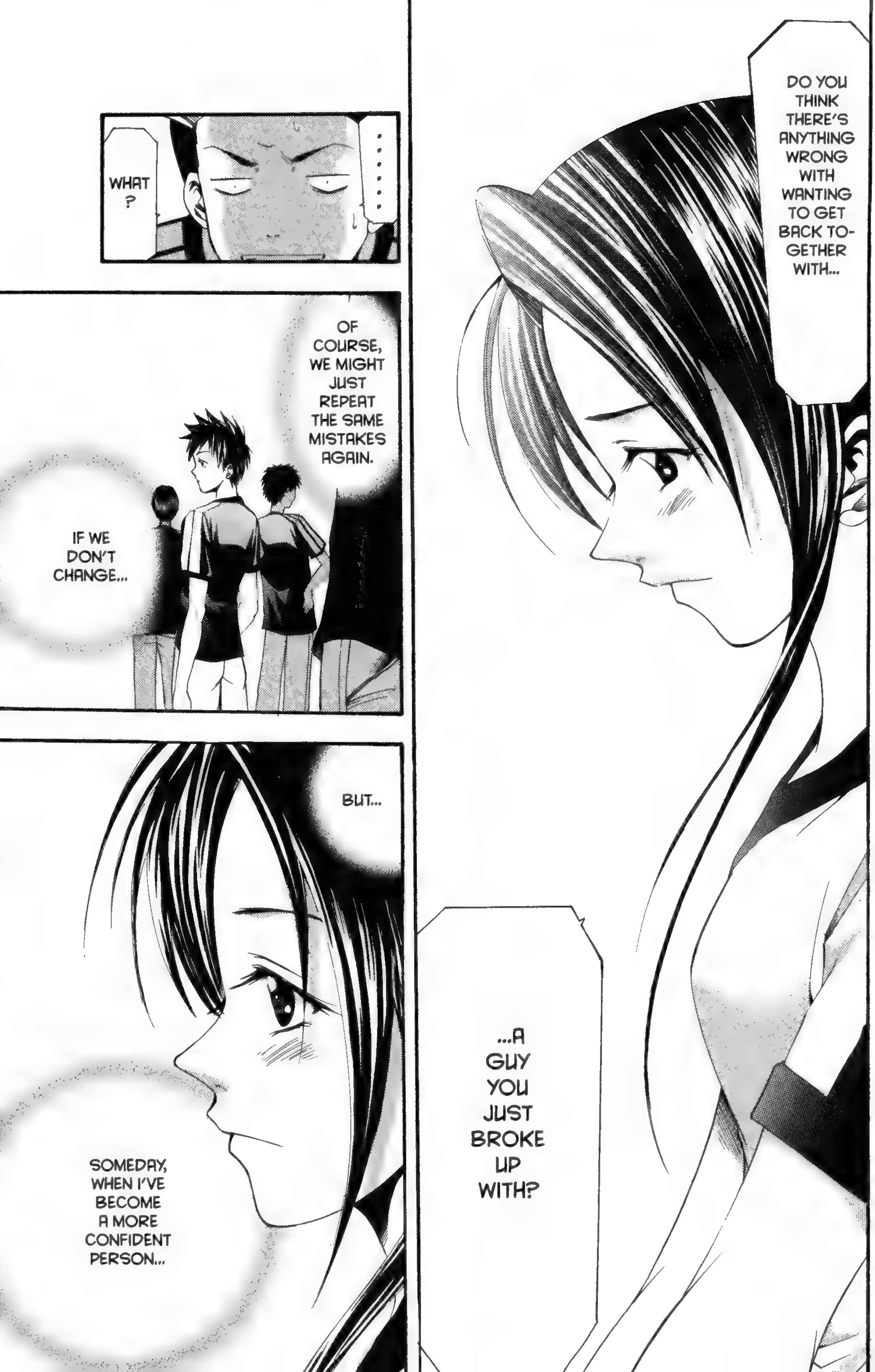

I FELT LIKE...
...I REALLY DID LOVE YOU.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT...
WHAT...?
THE BREAK UP WAS PROBABLY...
...ALL MY FAULT...

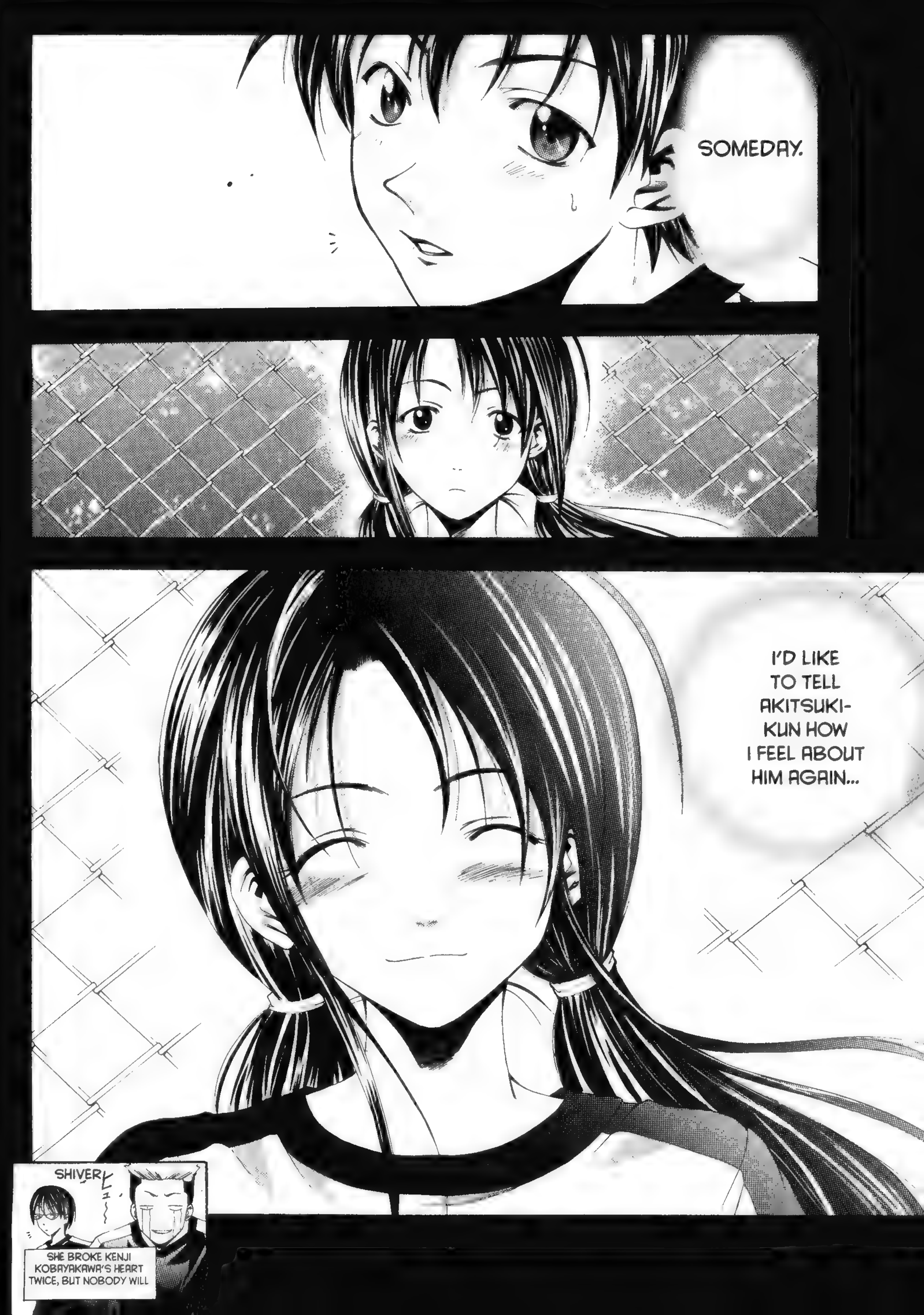

IF ONLY I HAD A BIT MORE SELF-CONFIDENCE...
THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO GO THROUGH ALL THIS.
HONOKA...
DON'T WORRY! YOU'RE SUCH A CUTIE.
I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND A NEW BOYFRIEND SOON!
TWIRL
NANA-CHAN...
YOU NEVER KNOW, THERE COULD BE A GUY OUT THERE WHO'S GOT HIS EYE ON YOU...
HE COULD BE RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
OH, YEAH? HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?


THE FOLLOWING DAY-
LOOKS LIKE SAKURAI ISN'T HERE AGAIN TODAY.
GUESS YOU CAN'T BLAME HER...
COME ON, QUIT SLACKING OFF, EVERYBODY!!
TIME TO RUN SOME INTERVALS!
ALL RIGHT...
I'M BEAT.
I JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE RUNNING TODAY... WONDER WHOSE FAULT THAT IS....
......
YEAH, ME EITHER.
FWOOSH
FWOOSH
FWOOSH
ハ?
HAHH
ハ?
HAHH
...HUH?


S-SORRY...
...ABOUT YESTERDAY.
SAKURAI...
WOO HOO!
OH...! SHE'S HERE!!
IT'S ALL RIGHT!! HAVE A SEAT!!
WHAT?!
HUH?
UM... WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO DRINK??!
......
HONOKA-CHAN...
ALL RIGHT THEN, LET'S GET STARTED!!
WOOO
YEAH!!
WOOO
......

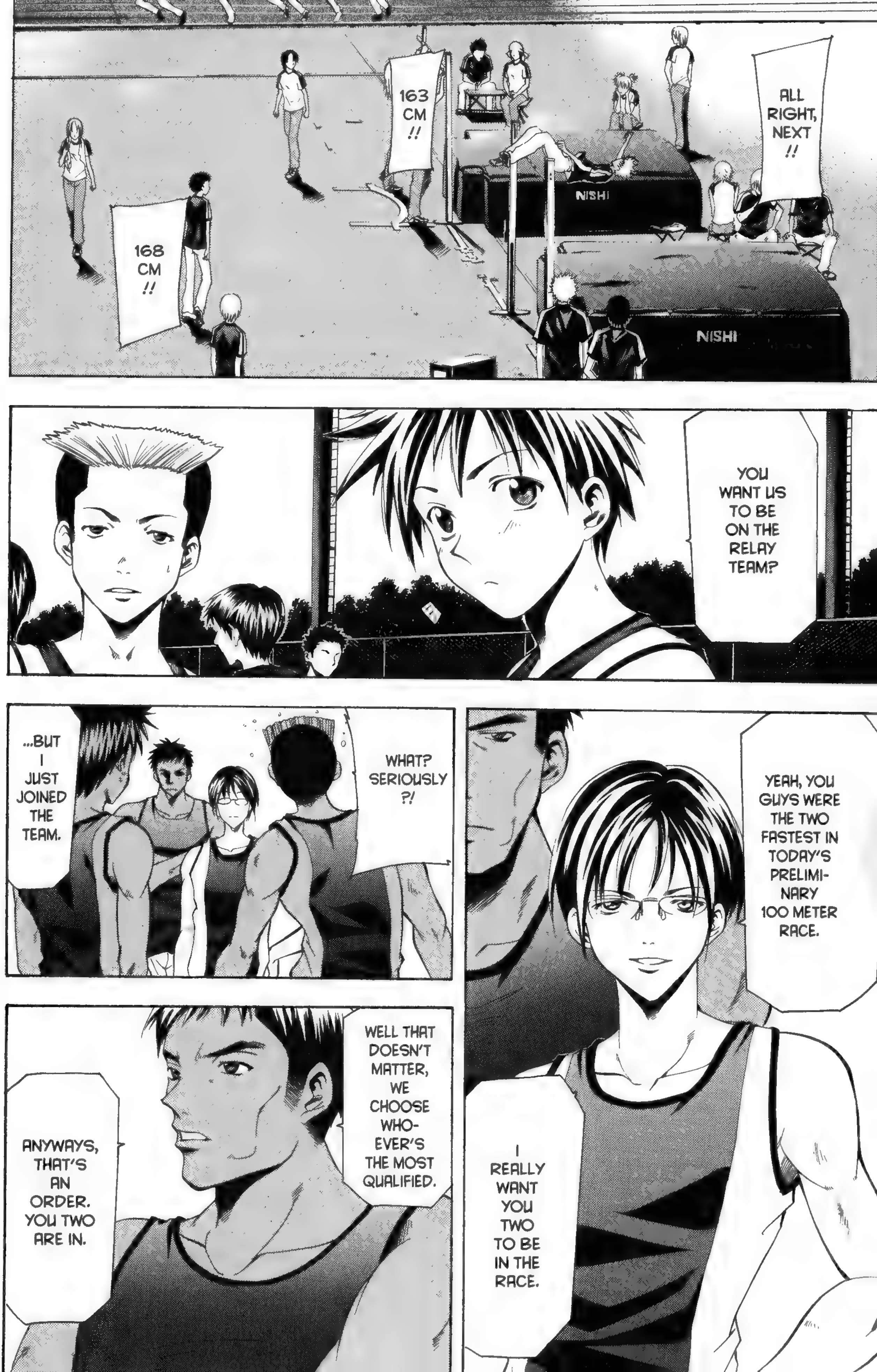

...THERE YOU GO.
CH-CHEER UP, SAKURAI...
...KOBAYAKAWA-KUN.
THANKS... THAT'S REALLY NICE OF YOU.
N-NO, NO PROBLEM.
ANY TIME!
WELL...
I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A LOT GOING ON, BUT, IF YOU EVER WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT, I'M HERE FOR YOU,
I...
...HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THIS SINCE YESTERDAY, BUT...
YEAH.

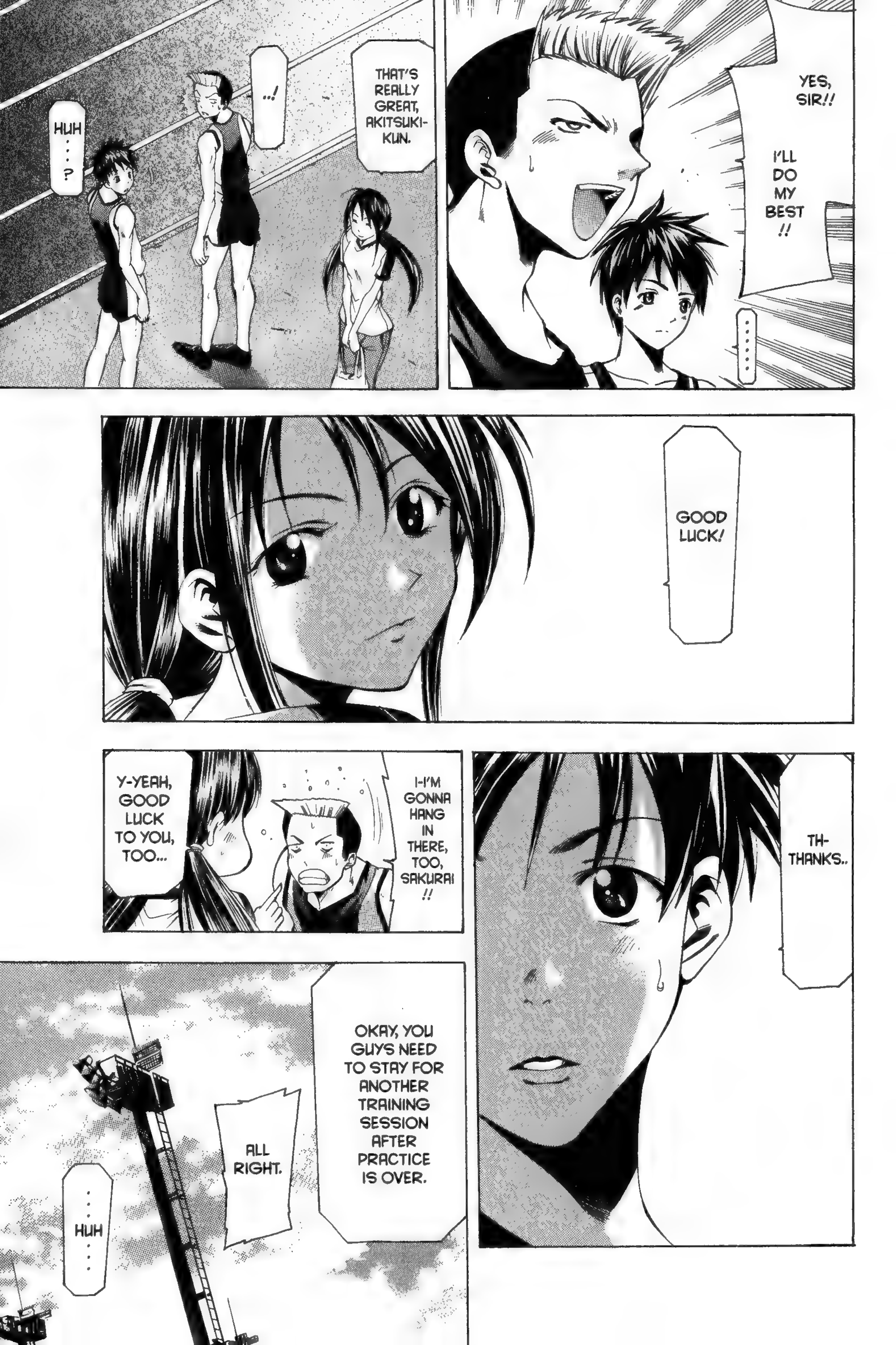

DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH WANTING TO GET BACK TOGETHER WITH...
...A GUY YOU JUST BROKE UP WITH?
......
WHAT?
OF COURSE, WE MIGHT JUST REPEAT THE SAME MISTAKES AGAIN.
IF WE DON'T CHANGE...
BUT...
SOMEDAY, WHEN I'VE BECOME A MORE CONFIDENT PERSON...

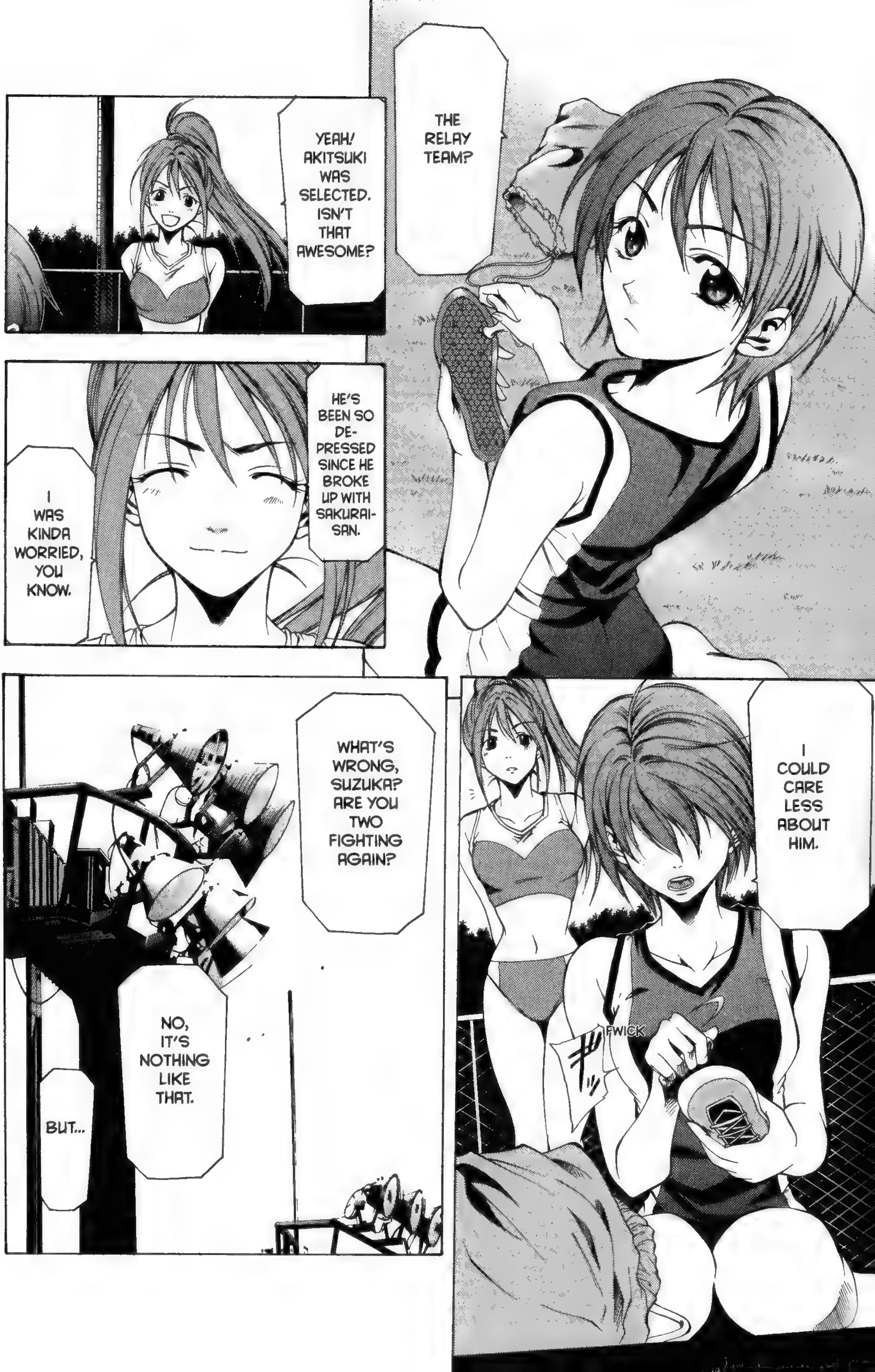

SOMEDAY.
I'D LIKE TO TELL AKITSUKI-KUN HOW I FEEL ABOUT HIM AGAIN...
SHIVER
ヒュ〜〜
SHE BROKE KENJI KOBAYAKAWA'S HEART TWICE, BUT NOBODY WILL

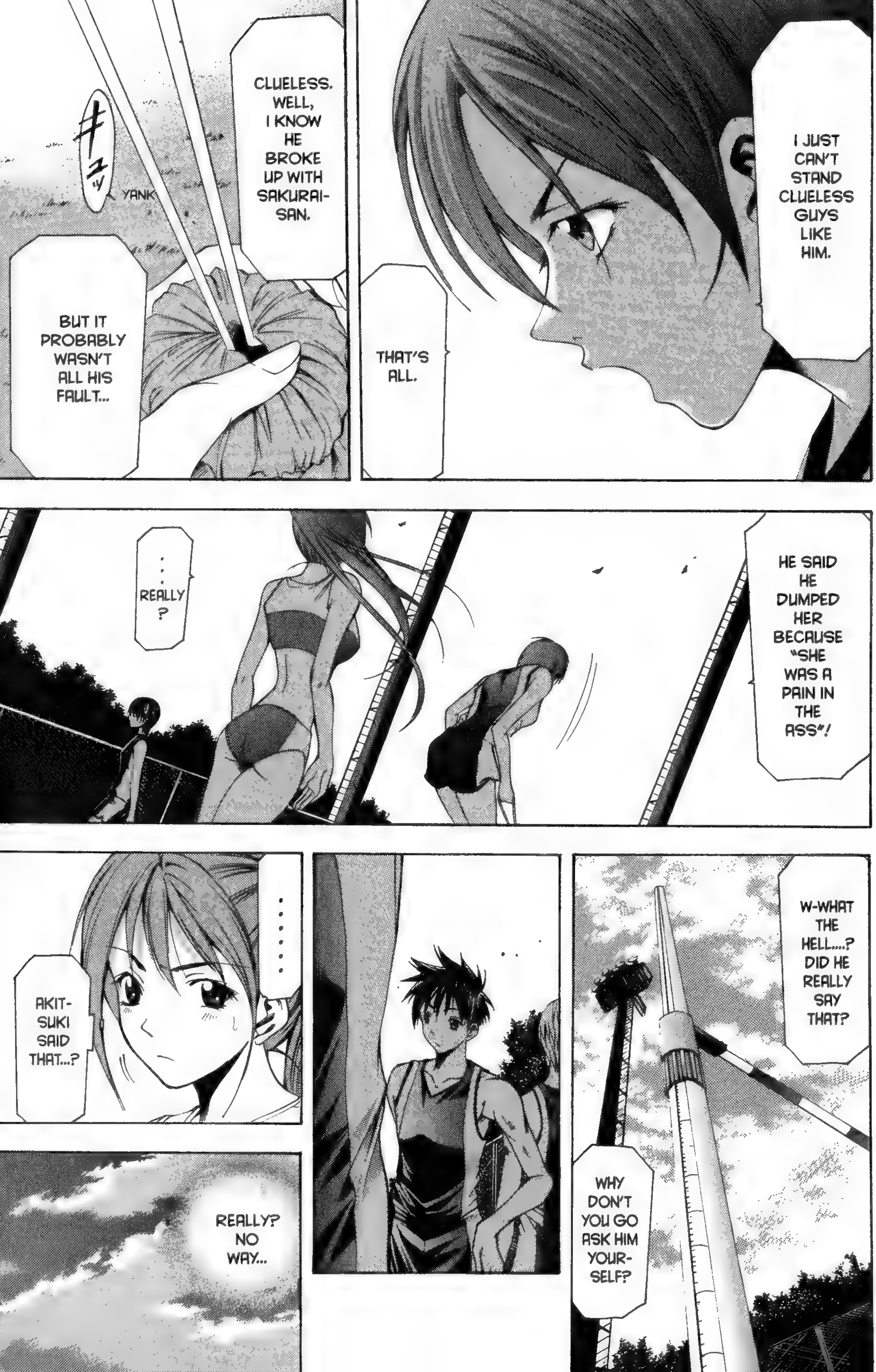
#55 ENCOURAGEMENT

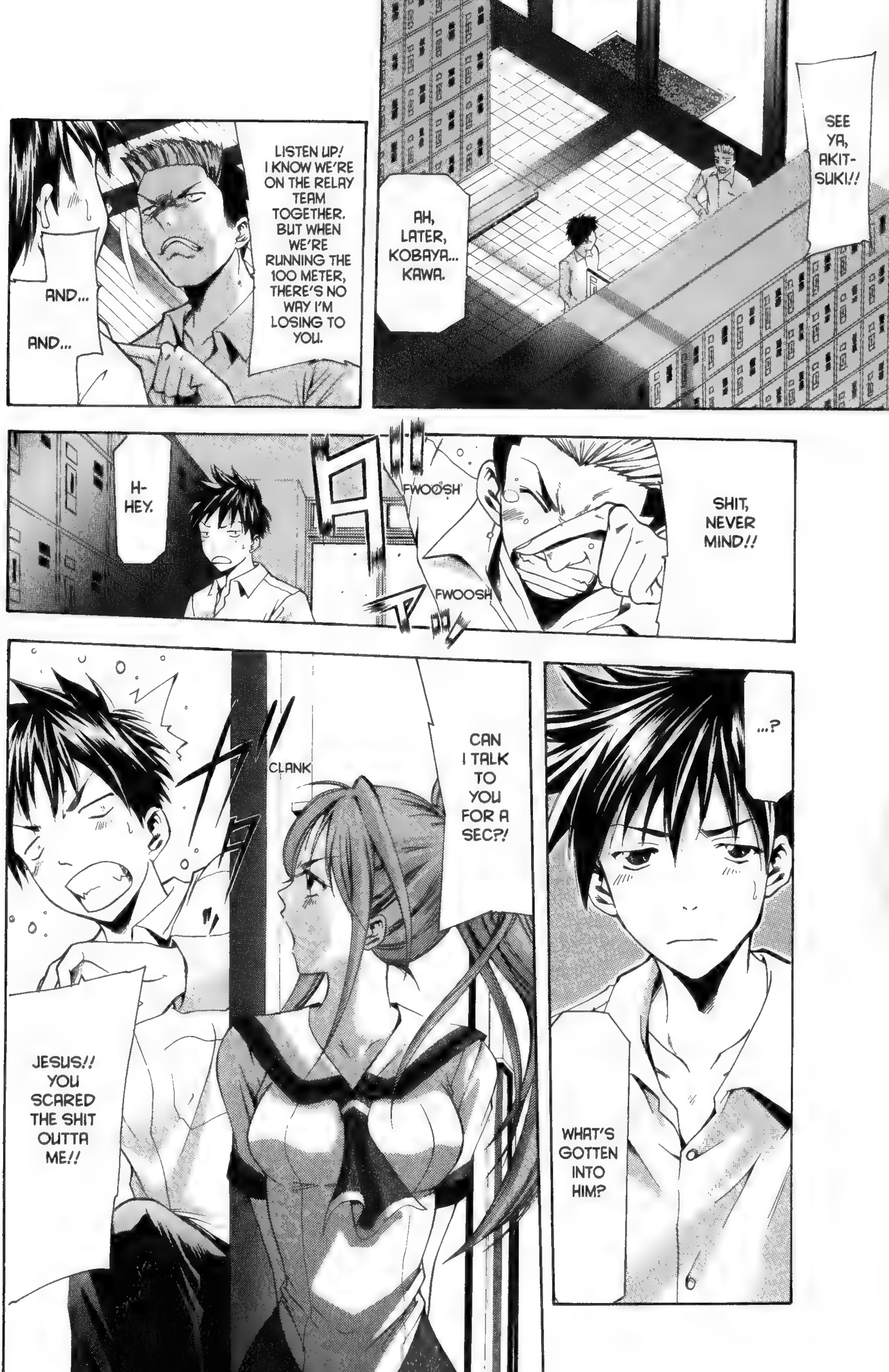
SUZUKA
CALIFORNIA
LOCO

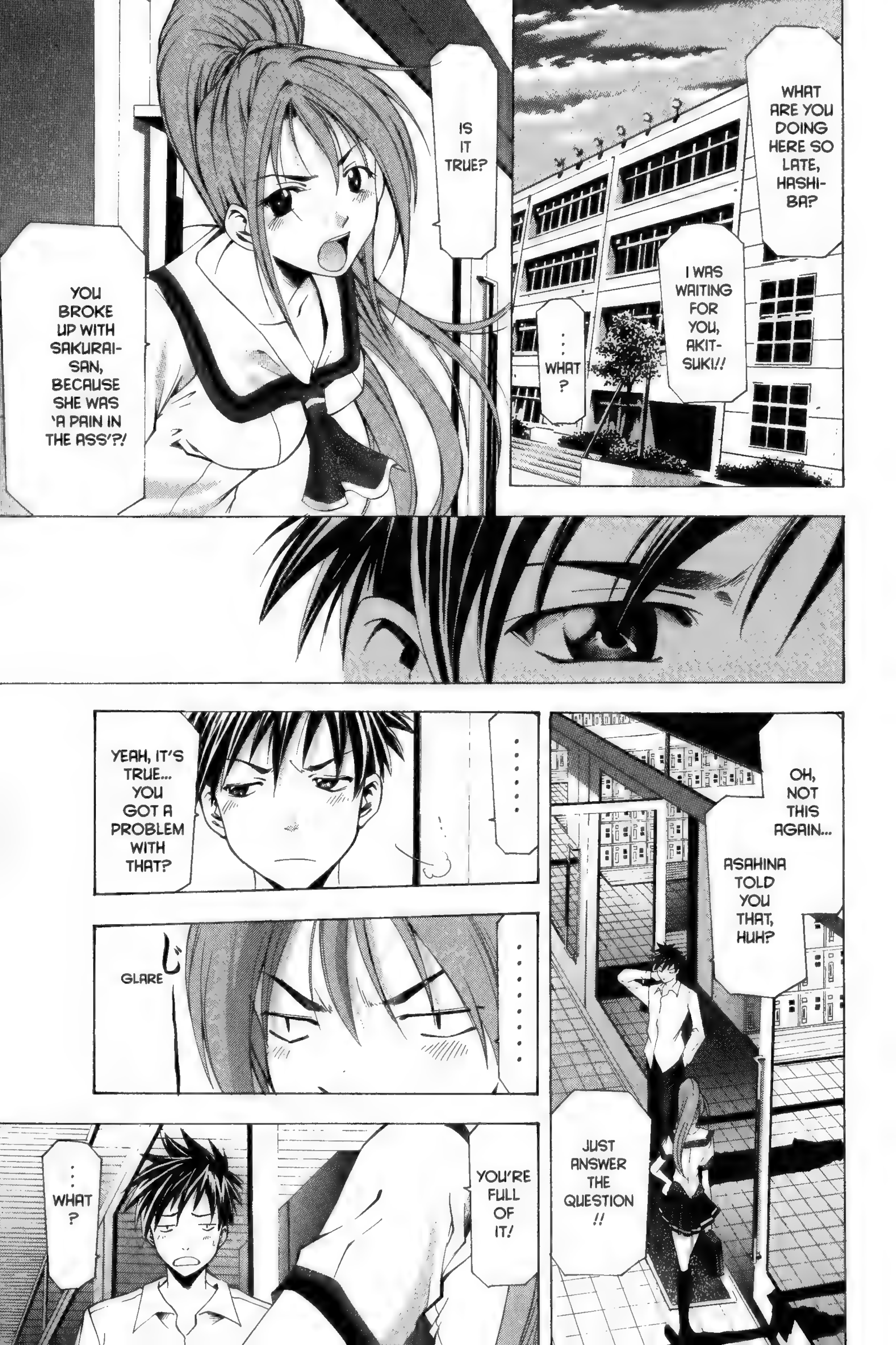

ALL RIGHT, NEXT !!
163 CM !!
168 CM !!
NISHI
NISHI
YOU WANT US TO BE ON THE RELAY TEAM?
YEAH, YOU GUYS WERE THE TWO FASTEST IN TODAY'S PRELIMINARY 100 METER RACE.
WHAT? SERIOUSLY ?!
...BUT I JUST JOINED THE TEAM.
WELL THAT DOESN'T MATTER, WE CHOOSE WHOEVER'S THE MOST QUALIFIED.
ANYWAYS, THAT'S AN ORDER. YOU TWO ARE IN.
I REALLY WANT YOU TWO TO BE IN THE RACE.

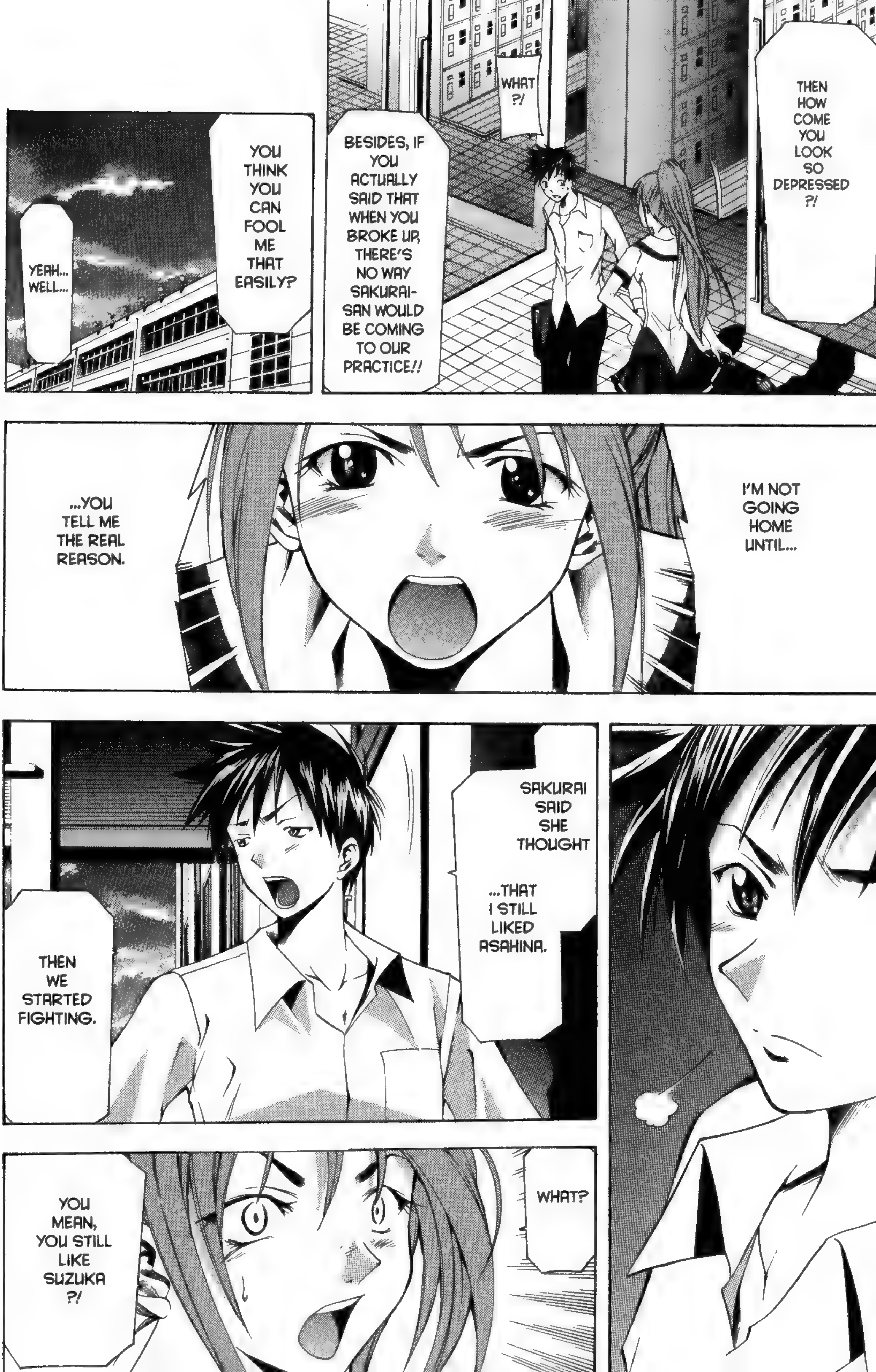

YES, SIR!!
I'LL DO MY BEST!!
......
THAT'S REALLY GREAT, AKITSUKI-KUN.
..!
HUH...?
GOOD LUCK!
TH-THANKS..
I-I'M GONNA HANG IN THERE, TOO, SAKURAI!!
Y-YEAH, GOOD LUCK TO YOU, TOO...
OKAY, YOU GUYS NEED TO STAY FOR ANOTHER TRAINING SESSION AFTER PRACTICE IS OVER.
ALL RIGHT.
...HUH...

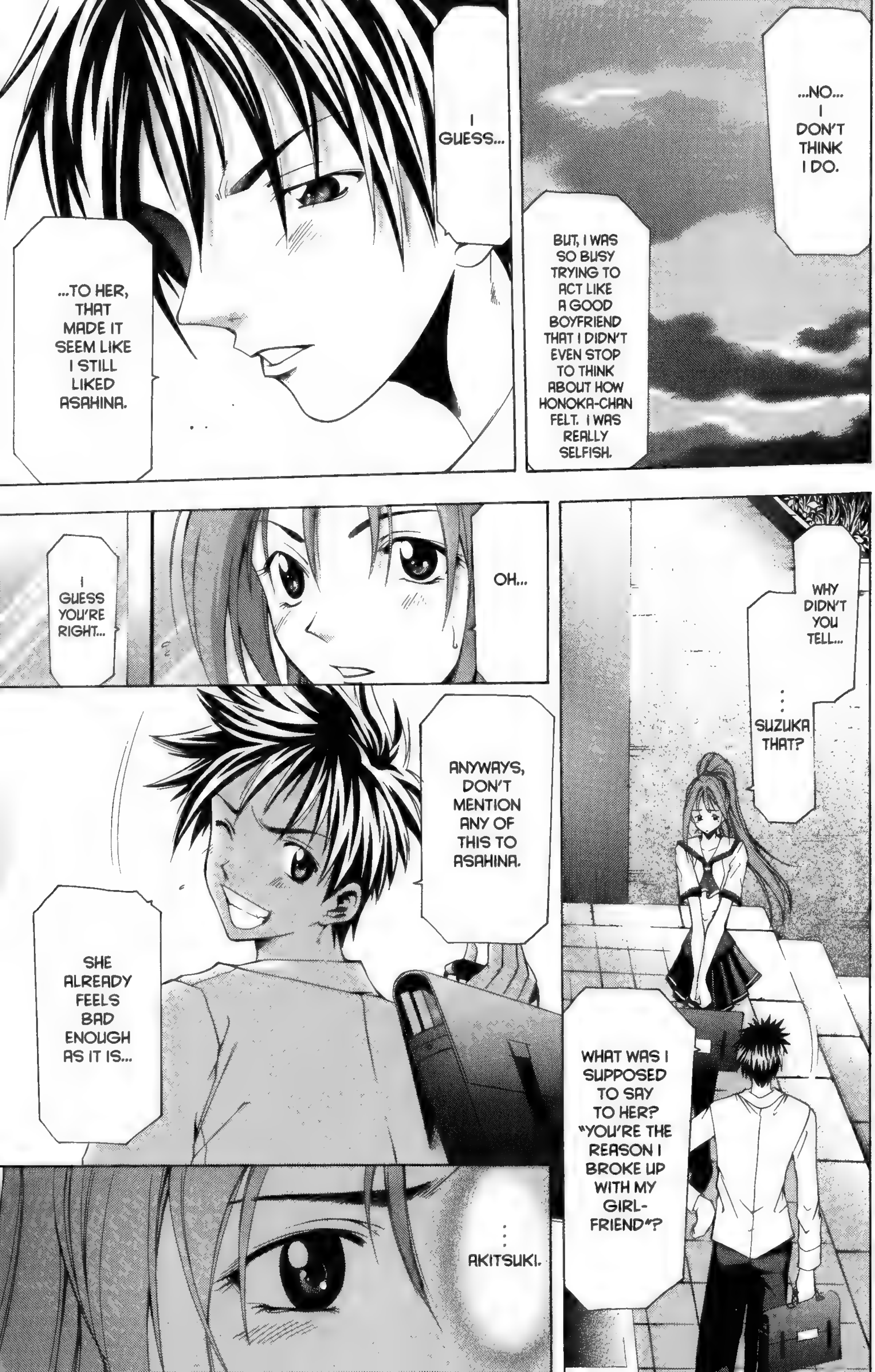

THE RELAY TEAM?
YEAH! AKITSUKI WAS SELECTED. ISN'T THAT AWESOME?
HE'S BEEN SO DEPRESSED SINCE HE BROKE UP WITH SAKURAI-SAN.
I WAS KINDA WORRIED, YOU KNOW.
I COULD CARE LESS ABOUT HIM.
FWICK
WHAT'S WRONG, SUZUKA? ARE YOU TWO FIGHTING AGAIN?
NO, IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT.
BUT...

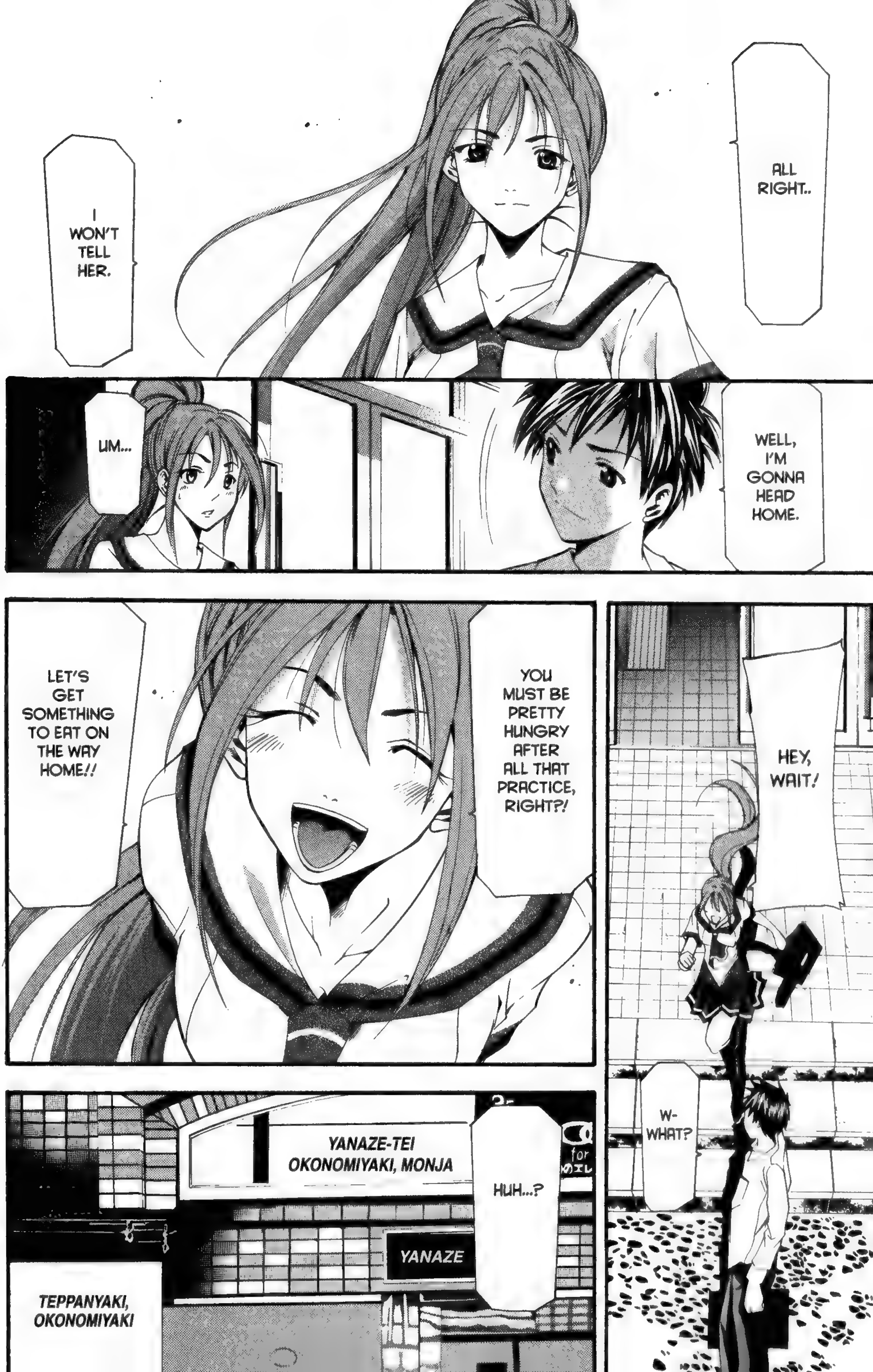

I JUST CAN'T STAND CLUELESS GUYS LIKE HIM.
THAT'S ALL.
CLUELESS. WELL, I KNOW HE BROKE UP WITH SAKURAI-SAN.
ギュッ
YANK
BUT IT PROBABLY WASN'T ALL HIS FAULT...
HE SAID HE DUMPED HER BECAUSE "SHE WAS A PAIN IN THE ASS"!
...REALLY?
W-WHAT THE HELL....? DID HE REALLY SAY THAT?
WHY DON'T YOU GO ASK HIM YOURSELF?
...
......
AKITSUKI SAID THAT...?
REALLY? NO WAY...

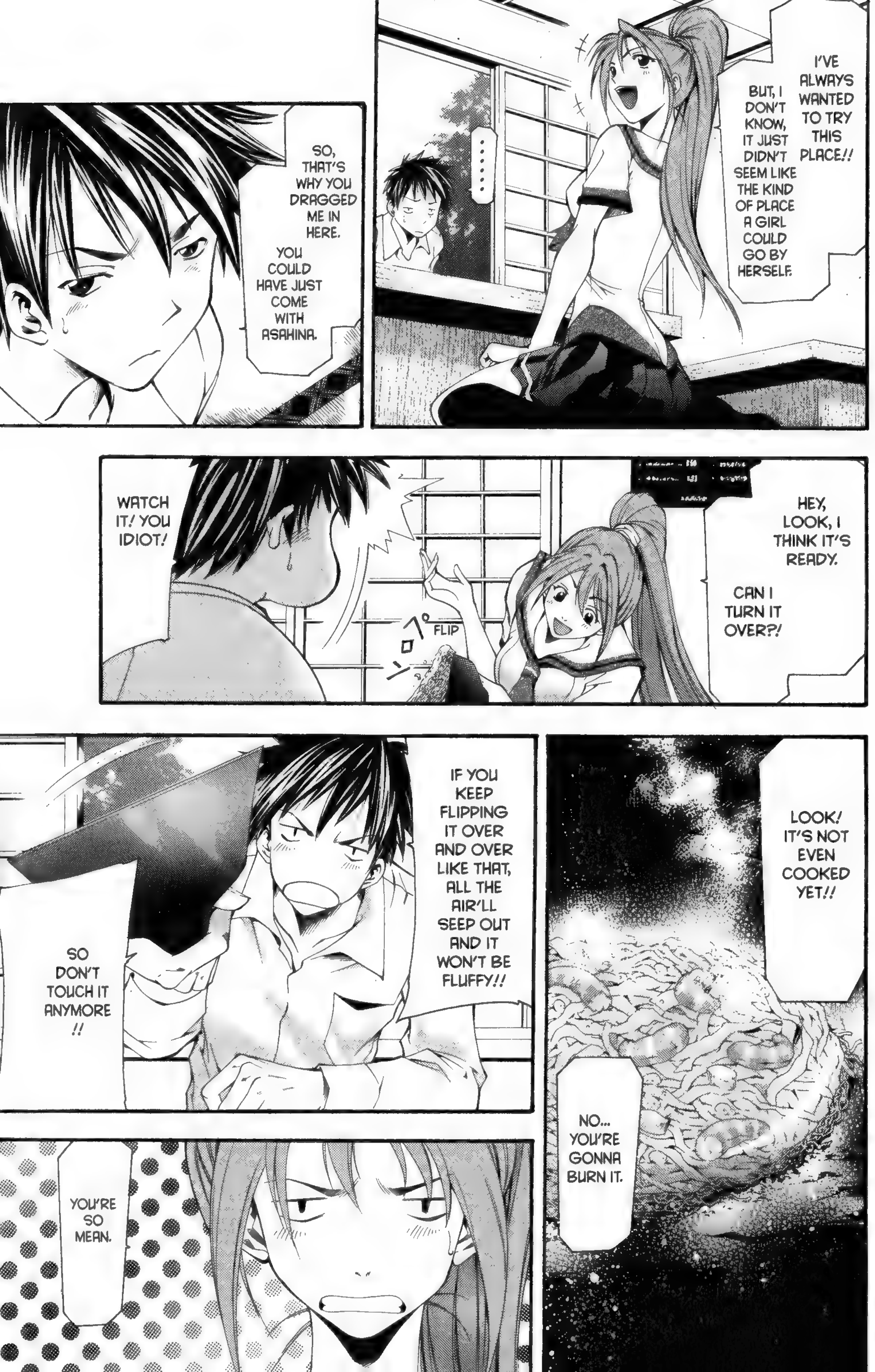

SEE YA, AKIT-SUKI!!
AH, LATER, KOBAYA... KAWA.
LISTEN UP! I KNOW WE'RE ON THE RELAY TEAM TOGETHER. BUT WHEN WE'RE RUNNING THE 100 METER, THERE'S NO WAY I'M LOSING TO YOU.
AND...
AND...
SHIT, NEVER MIND!!
FWOOSH
FWOOSH
H-HEY.
...?
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO HIM?
CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A SEC?!
CLANK
JESUS!! YOU SCARED THE SHIT OUTTA ME!!

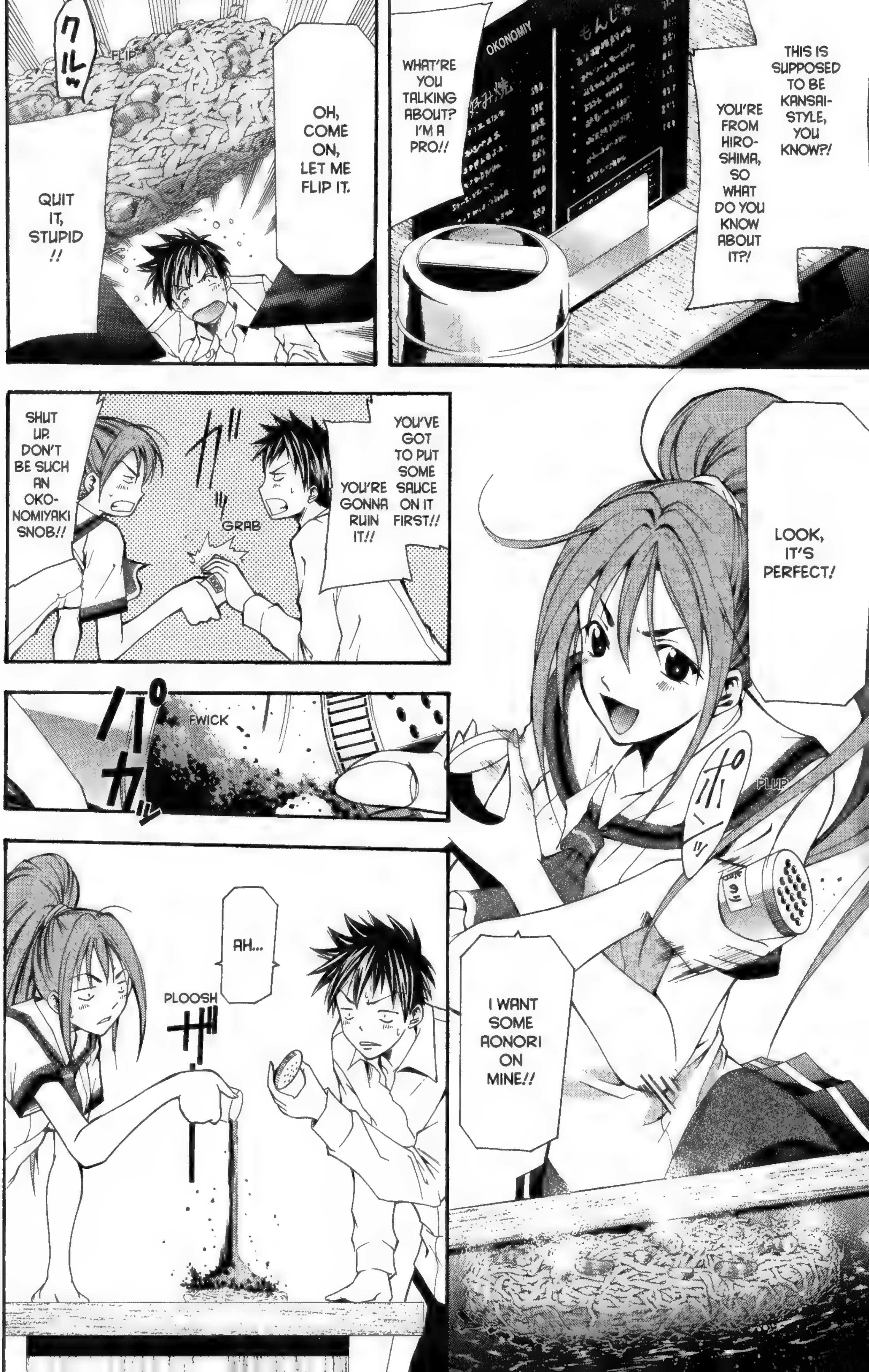

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE SO LATE, HASHIBA?
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU, AKITSUKI!!
...WHAT?
IS IT TRUE?
YOU BROKE UP WITH SAKURAI-SAN, BECAUSE SHE WAS 'A PAIN IN THE ASS'?!
OH, NOT THIS AGAIN... ASAHINA TOLD YOU THAT, HUH?
JUST ANSWER THE QUESTION!!
......
YEAH, IT'S TRUE... YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
....
じ GLARE
YOU'RE FULL OF IT!
...WHAT?

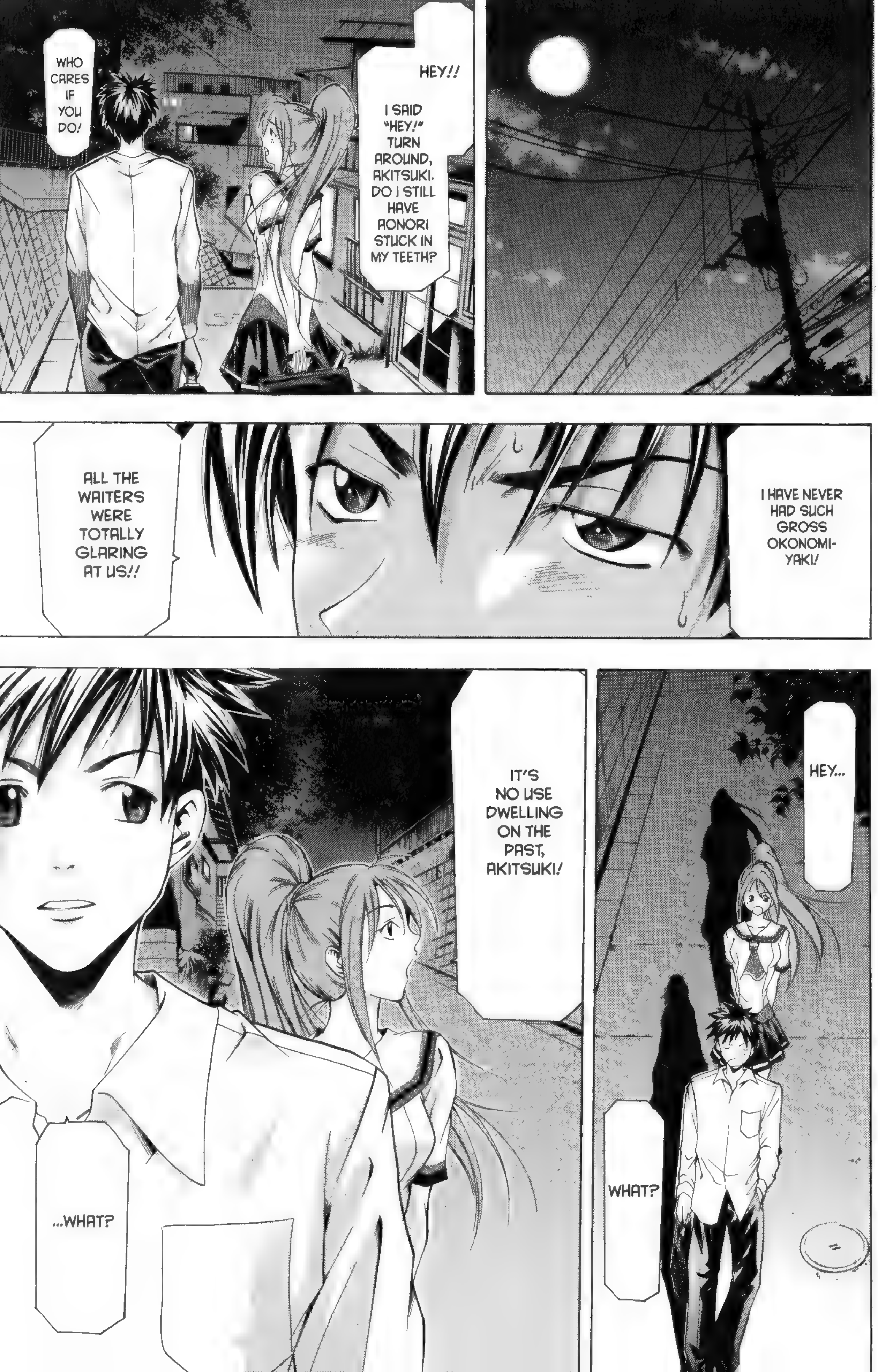

THEN HOW COME YOU LOOK SO DEPRESSED?!
WHAT?!
BESIDES, IF YOU ACTUALLY SAID THAT WHEN YOU BROKE UP, THERE'S NO WAY SAKURAI-SAN WOULD BE COMING TO OUR PRACTICE!!
YOU THINK YOU CAN FOOL ME THAT EASILY?
YEAH... WELL...
I'M NOT GOING HOME UNTIL...
...YOU TELL ME THE REAL REASON.
SAKURAI SAID SHE THOUGHT
...THAT I STILL LIKED ASAHINA.
THEN WE STARTED FIGHTING.
WHAT?
YOU MEAN, YOU STILL LIKE SUZUKA?!

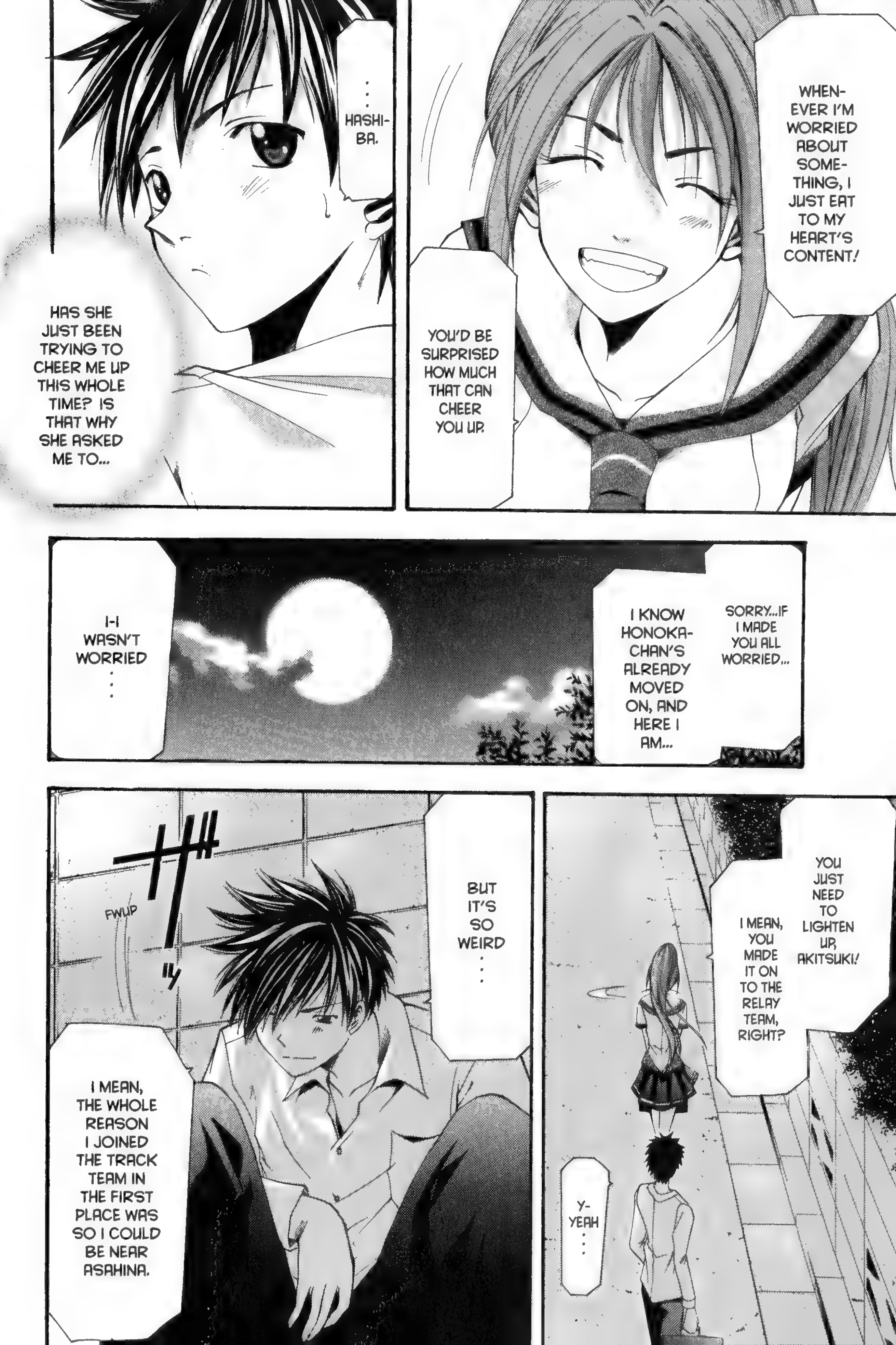

...NO... I DON'T THINK I DO.
BUT, I WAS SO BUSY TRYING TO ACT LIKE A GOOD BOYFRIEND THAT I DIDN'T EVEN STOP TO THINK ABOUT HOW HONOKA-CHAN FELT. I WAS REALLY SELFISH.
I GUESS...
...TO HER, THAT MADE IT SEEM LIKE I STILL LIKED ASAHINA.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL... ...SUZUKA THAT?
WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO SAY TO HER? "YOU'RE THE REASON I BROKE UP WITH MY GIRLFRIEND"?
OH...
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
ANYWAYS, DON'T MENTION ANY OF THIS TO ASAHINA.
SHE ALREADY FEELS BAD ENOUGH AS IT IS...
... AKITSUKI.

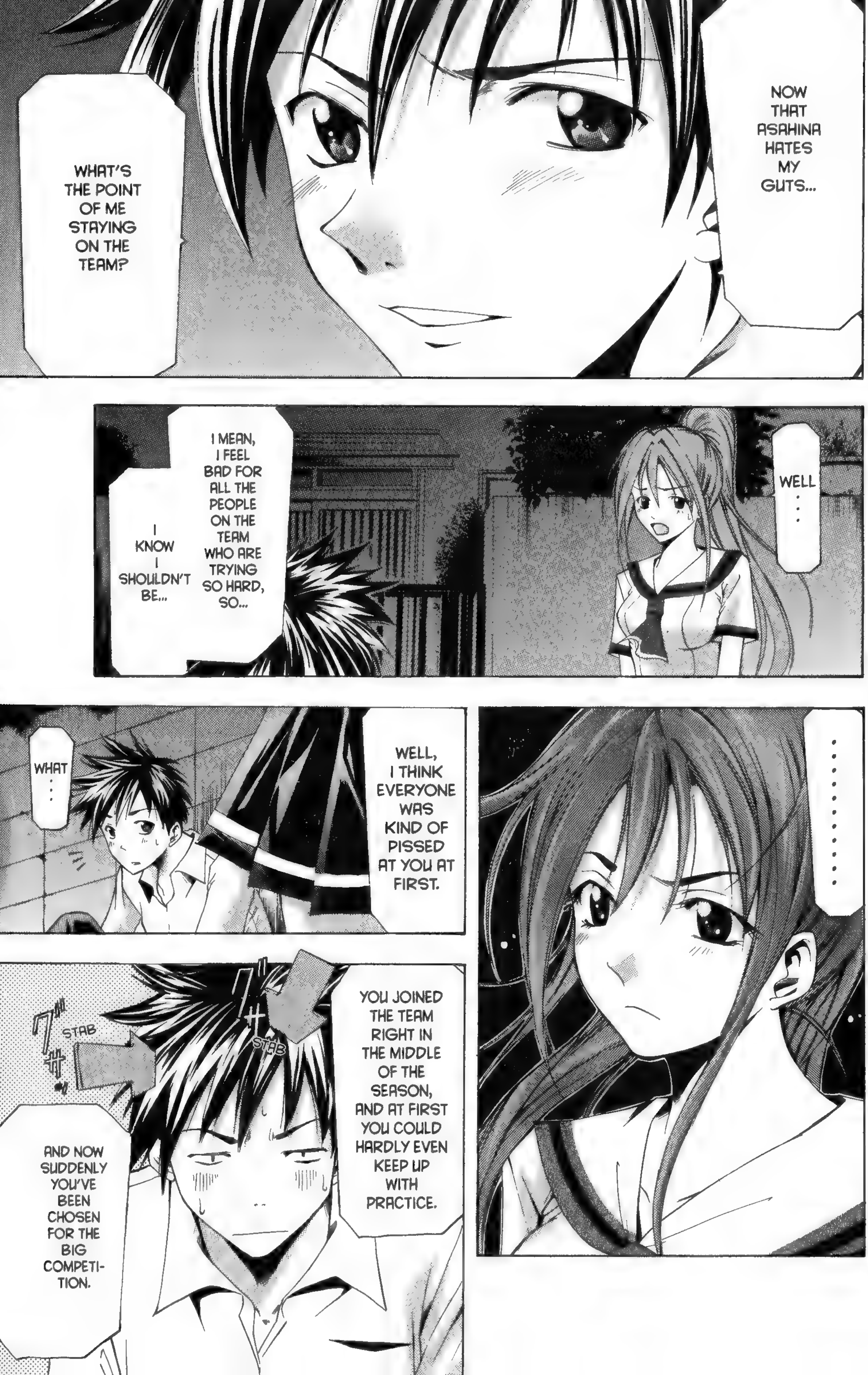

ALL RIGHT..
I WON'T TELL HER.
WELL, I'M GONNA HEAD HOME.
UM...
HEY, WAIT!
W-WHAT?
YOU MUST BE PRETTY HUNGRY AFTER ALL THAT PRACTICE, RIGHT?!
LET'S GET SOMETHING TO EAT ON THE WAY HOME!!
YANAZE-TEI OKONOMIYAKI, MONJA
HUH...?
YANAZE
TEPPANYAKI, OKONOMIYAKI

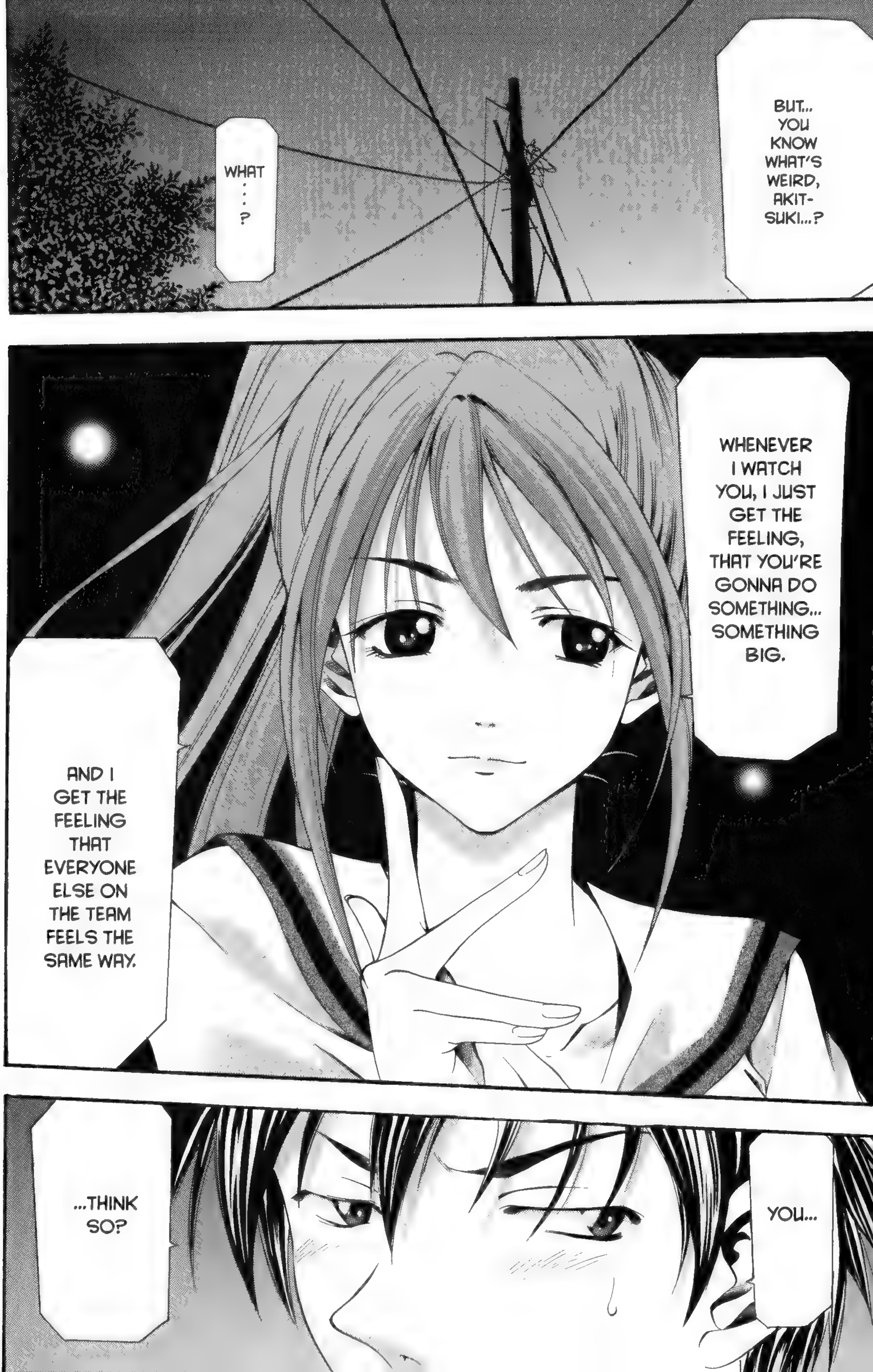

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY THIS PLACE!!
BUT, I DON'T KNOW, IT JUST DIDN'T SEEM LIKE THE KIND OF PLACE A GIRL COULD GO BY HERSELF.
......
SO, THAT'S WHY YOU DRAGGED ME IN HERE.
YOU COULD HAVE JUST COME WITH ASAHINA.
HEY, LOOK, I THINK IT'S READY.
CAN I TURN IT OVER?!
FLIP
WATCH IT! YOU IDIOT!
LOOK! IT'S NOT EVEN COOKED YET!!
NO... YOU'RE GONNA BURN IT.
IF YOU KEEP FLIPPING IT OVER AND OVER LIKE THAT, ALL THE AIR'LL SEEP OUT AND IT WON'T BE FLUFFY!!
SO DON'T TOUCH IT ANYMORE!!
YOU'RE SO MEAN.

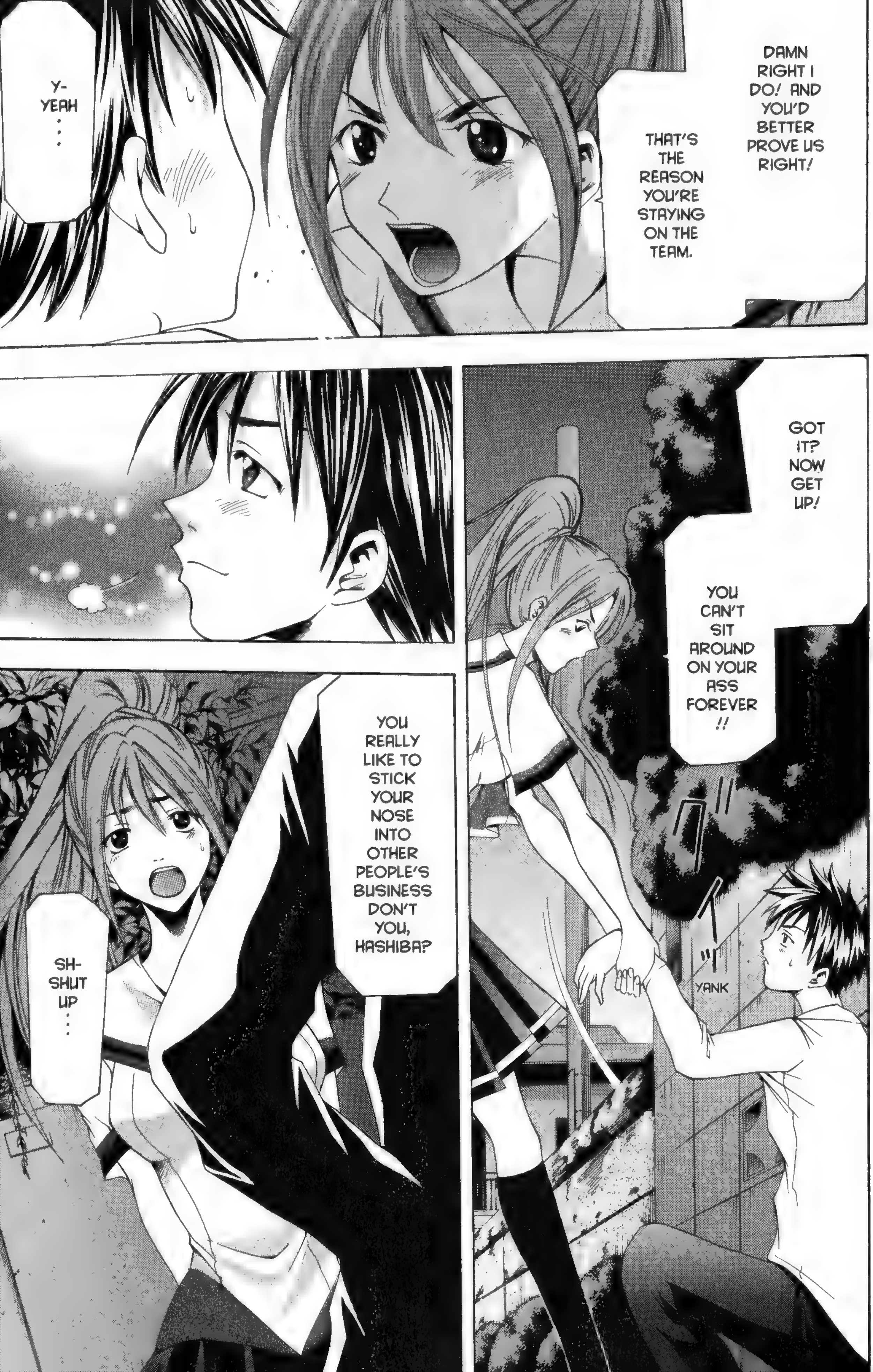

THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE KANSAI-STYLE, YOU KNOW?!
YOU'RE FROM HIROSHIMA, SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?!
OKONOMIY
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M A PRO!!
OH, COME ON, LET ME FLIP IT.
クルッ
FLIP
QUIT IT, STUPID!!
LOOK, IT'S PERFECT!
YOU'VE GOT TO PUT SOME SAUCE ON IT FIRST!!
YOU'RE GONNA RUIN IT!!
ガッ
GRAB
SHUT UP. DON'T BE SUCH AN OKONOMIYAKI SNOB!!
パカッ
FWICK
ポン
PLUP
I WANT SOME AONORI ON MINE!!
AH...
ザザ
PLOOSH

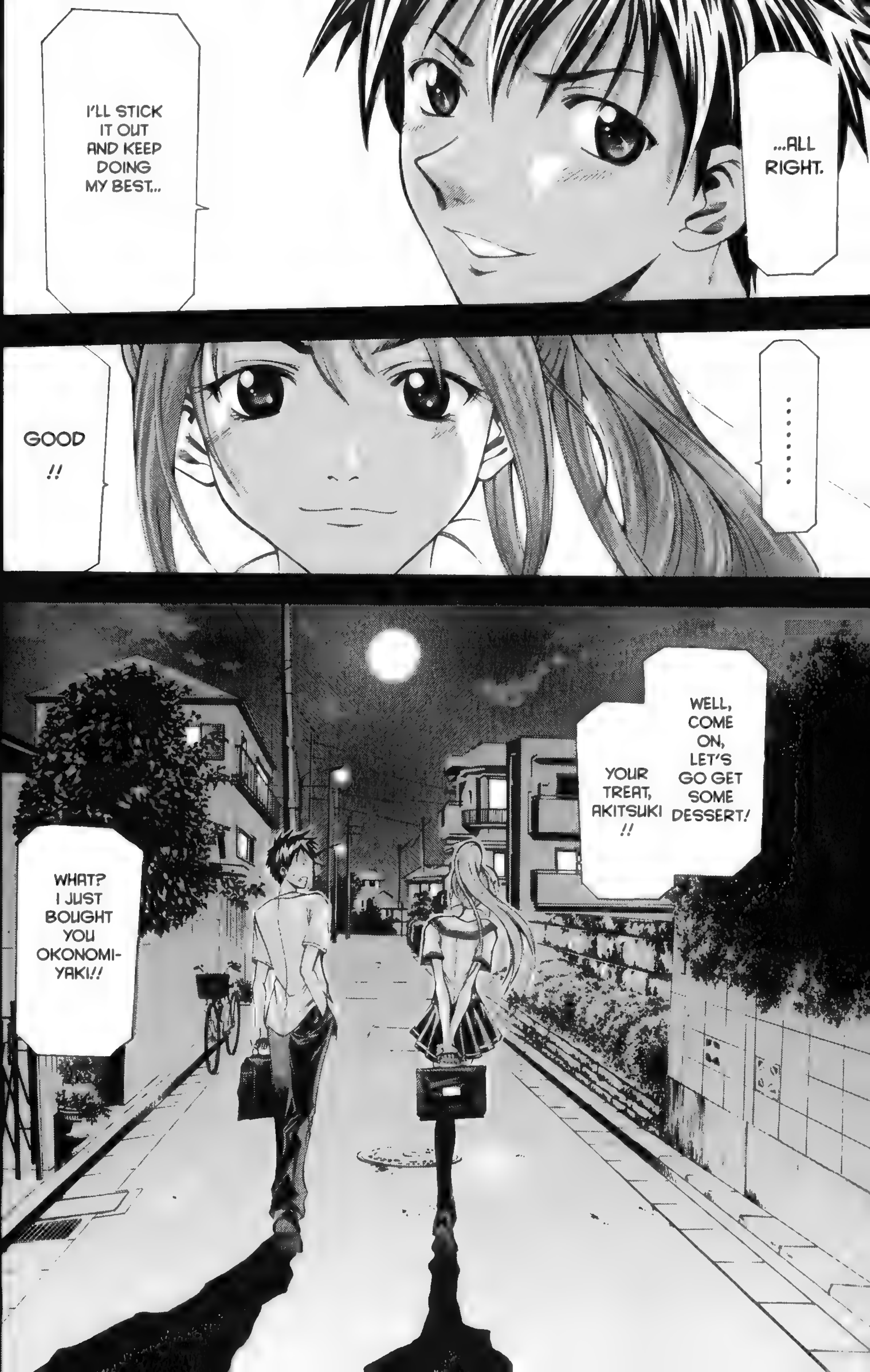

HEY!!
I SAID "HEY!" TURN AROUND, AKITSUKI. DO I STILL HAVE AONORI STUCK IN MY TEETH?
WHO CARES IF YOU DO!
I HAVE NEVER HAD SUCH GROSS OKONOMIYAKI!
ALL THE WAITERS WERE TOTALLY GLARING AT US!!
HEY...
WHAT?
IT'S NO USE DWELLING ON THE PAST, AKITSUKI!
...WHAT?

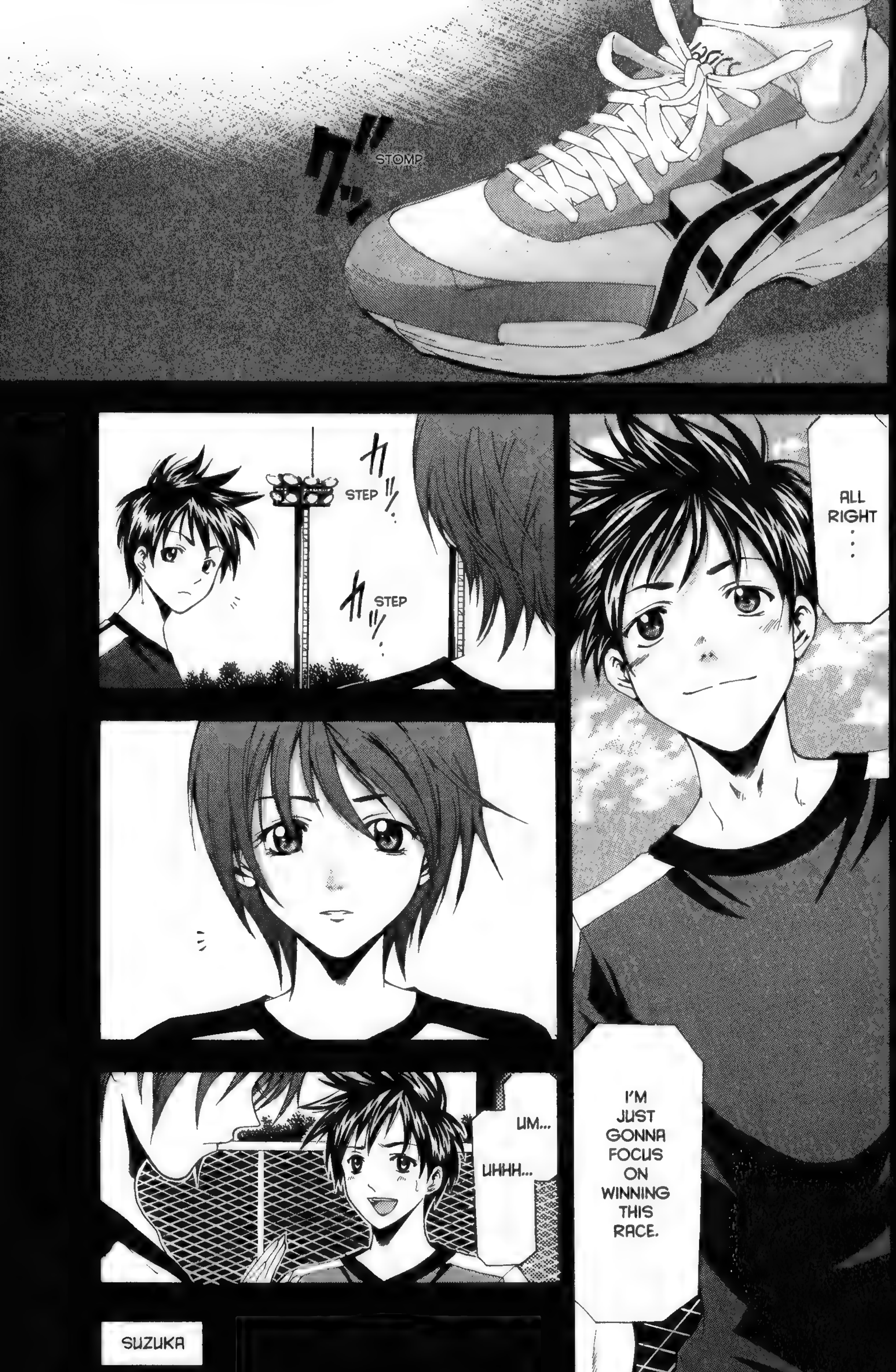

WHENEVER I'M WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING, I JUST EAT TO MY HEART'S CONTENT!
YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MUCH THAT CAN CHEER YOU UP.
...HASHIBA.
HAS SHE JUST BEEN TRYING TO CHEER ME UP THIS WHOLE TIME? IS THAT WHY SHE ASKED ME TO...
SORRY...IF I MADE YOU ALL WORRIED...
I KNOW HONOKA-CHAN'S ALREADY MOVED ON, AND HERE I AM...
I-I WASN'T WORRIED...
YOU JUST NEED TO LIGHTEN UP, AKITSUKI!
I MEAN, YOU MADE IT ON TO THE RELAY TEAM, RIGHT?
Y-YEAH...
FWUP
BUT IT'S SO WEIRD...
I MEAN, THE WHOLE REASON I JOINED THE TRACK TEAM IN THE FIRST PLACE WAS SO I COULD BE NEAR ASAHINA.

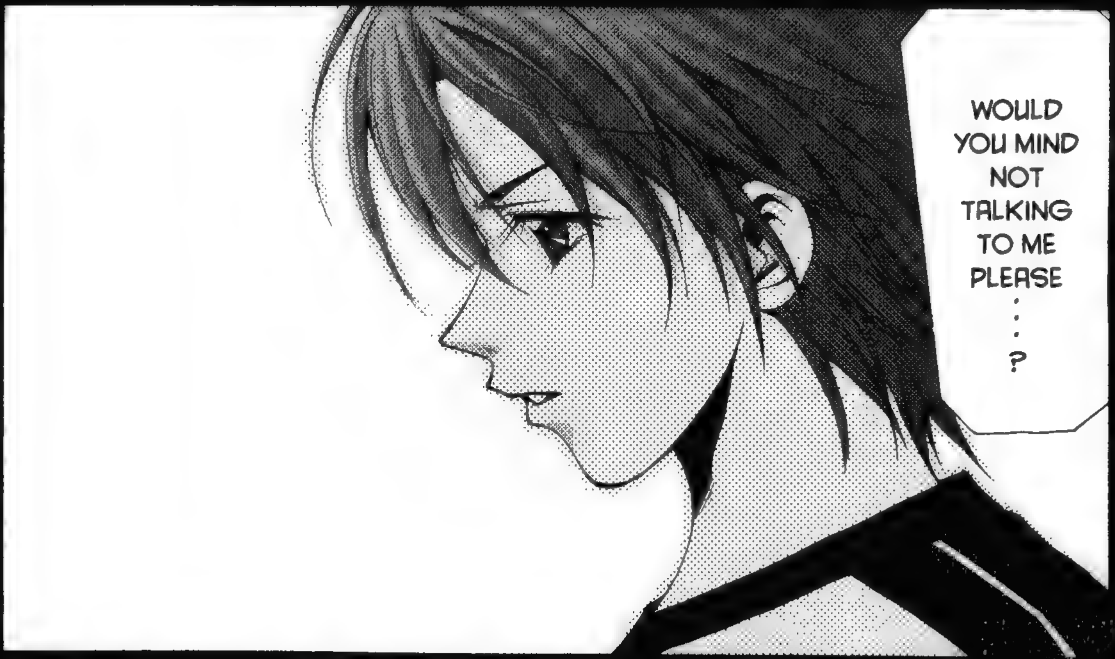

NOW THAT ASAHINA HATES MY GUTS...
WHAT'S THE POINT OF ME STAYING ON THE TEAM?
WELL...
I MEAN, I FEEL BAD FOR ALL THE PEOPLE ON THE TEAM WHO ARE TRYING SO HARD, SO...
I KNOW I SHOULDN'T BE...
....
WELL, I THINK EVERYONE WAS KIND OF PISSED AT YOU AT FIRST.
WHAT...
YOU JOINED THE TEAM RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEASON, AND AT FIRST YOU COULD HARDLY EVEN KEEP UP WITH PRACTICE.
STAB
STAB
AND NOW SUDDENLY YOU'VE BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE BIG COMPETITION.


BUT... YOU KNOW WHAT'S WEIRD, AKITSUKI...?
WHAT . . . ?
WHENEVER I WATCH YOU, I JUST GET THE FEELING, THAT YOU'RE GONNA DO SOMETHING... SOMETHING BIG.
AND I GET THE FEELING THAT EVERYONE ELSE ON THE TEAM FEELS THE SAME WAY.
YOU...
...THINK SO?


DAMN RIGHT I DO! AND YOU'D BETTER PROVE US RIGHT!
THAT'S THE REASON YOU'RE STAYING ON THE TEAM.
Y-YEAH...
GOT IT? NOW GET UP!
YOU CAN'T SIT AROUND ON YOUR ASS FOREVER!!
YANK
YOU REALLY LIKE TO STICK YOUR NOSE INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS DON'T YOU, HASHIBA?
SH-SHUT UP...

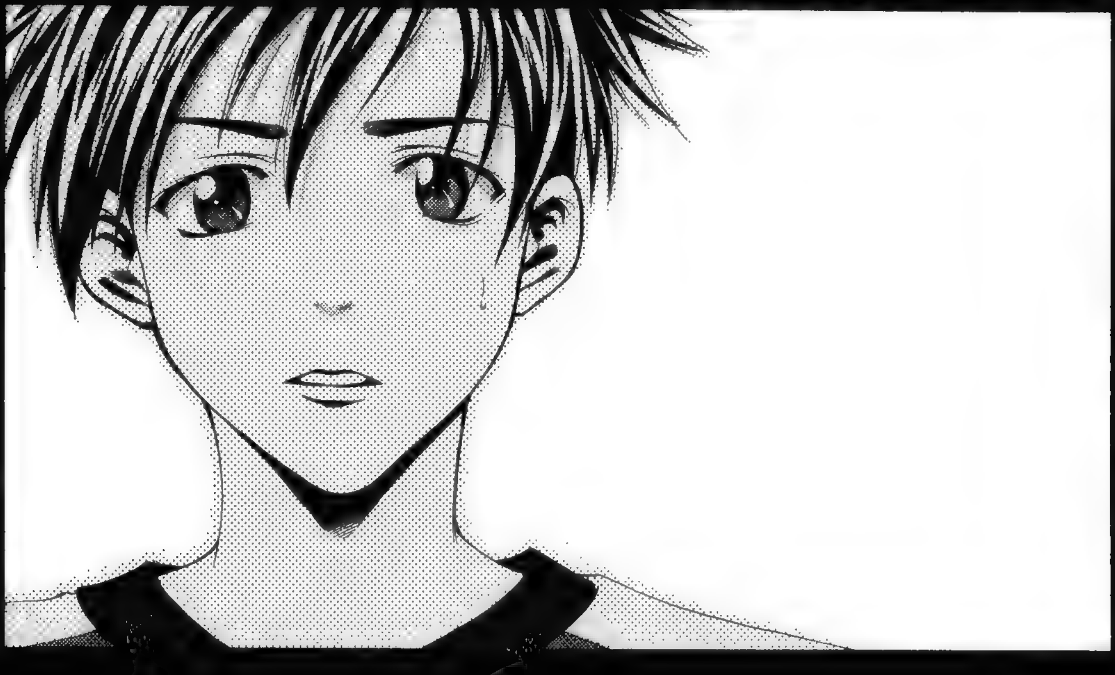

...ALL RIGHT.
I'LL STICK IT OUT AND KEEP DOING MY BEST...
....
GOOD!!
WELL, COME ON, LET'S GO GET SOME DESSERT!
YOUR TREAT, AKITSUKI!!
WHAT? I JUST BOUGHT YOU OKONOMIYAKI!!

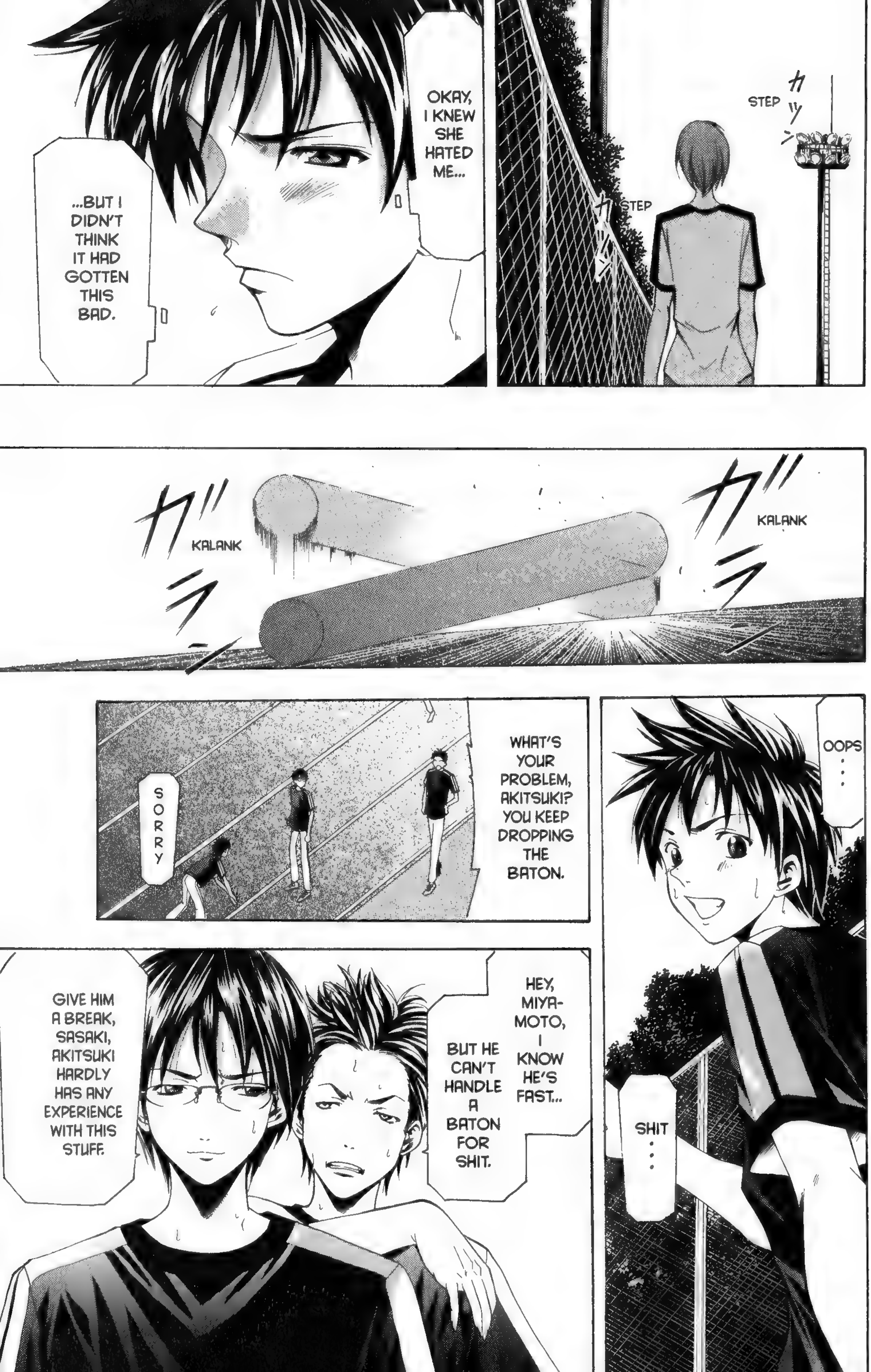

STOMP
ALL RIGHT...
I'M JUST GONNA FOCUS ON WINNING THIS RACE.
STEP
STEP
UM...
UHHH...
SUZUKA

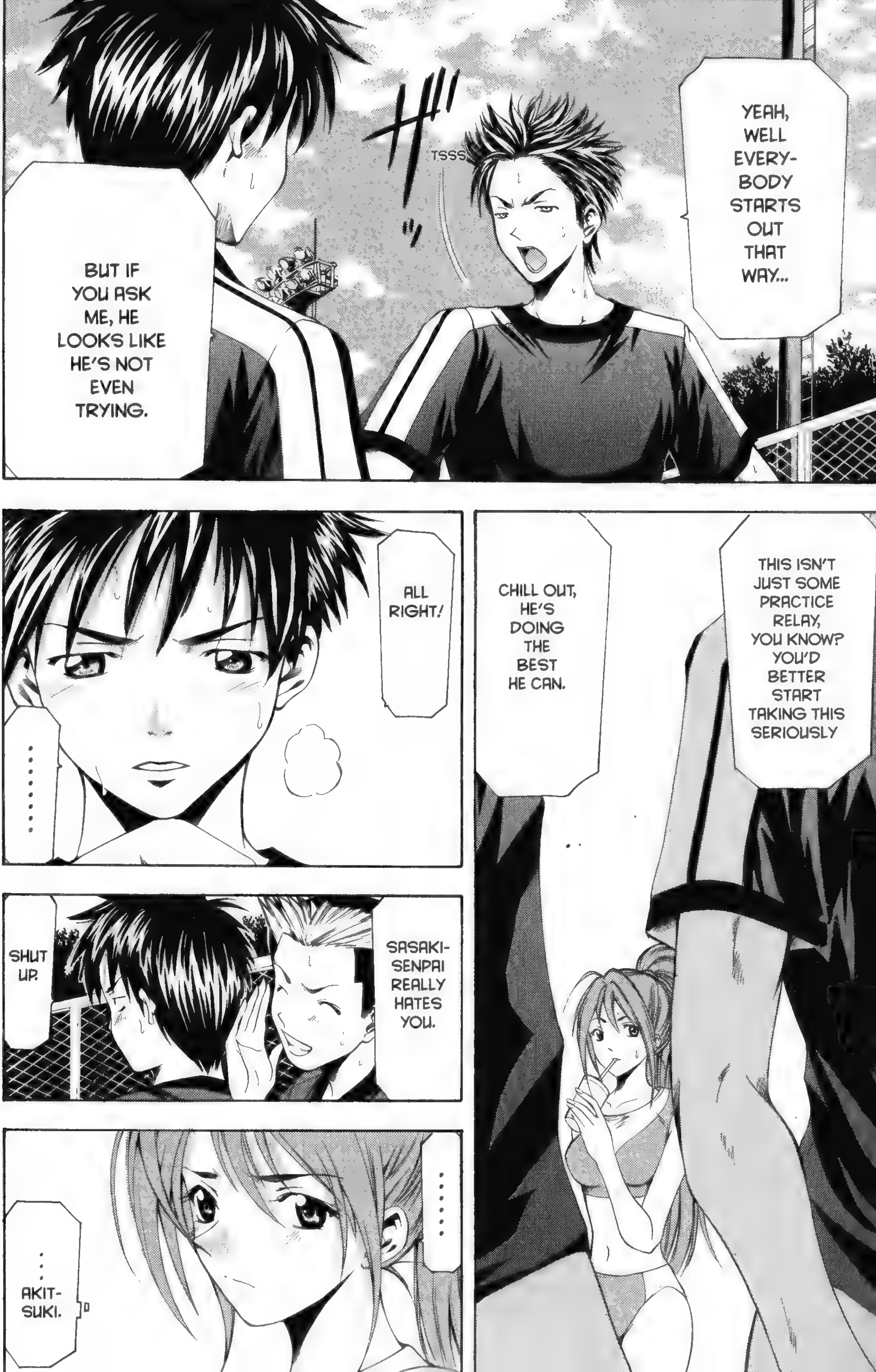

WOULD YOU MIND NOT TALKING TO ME PLEASE . . . ?

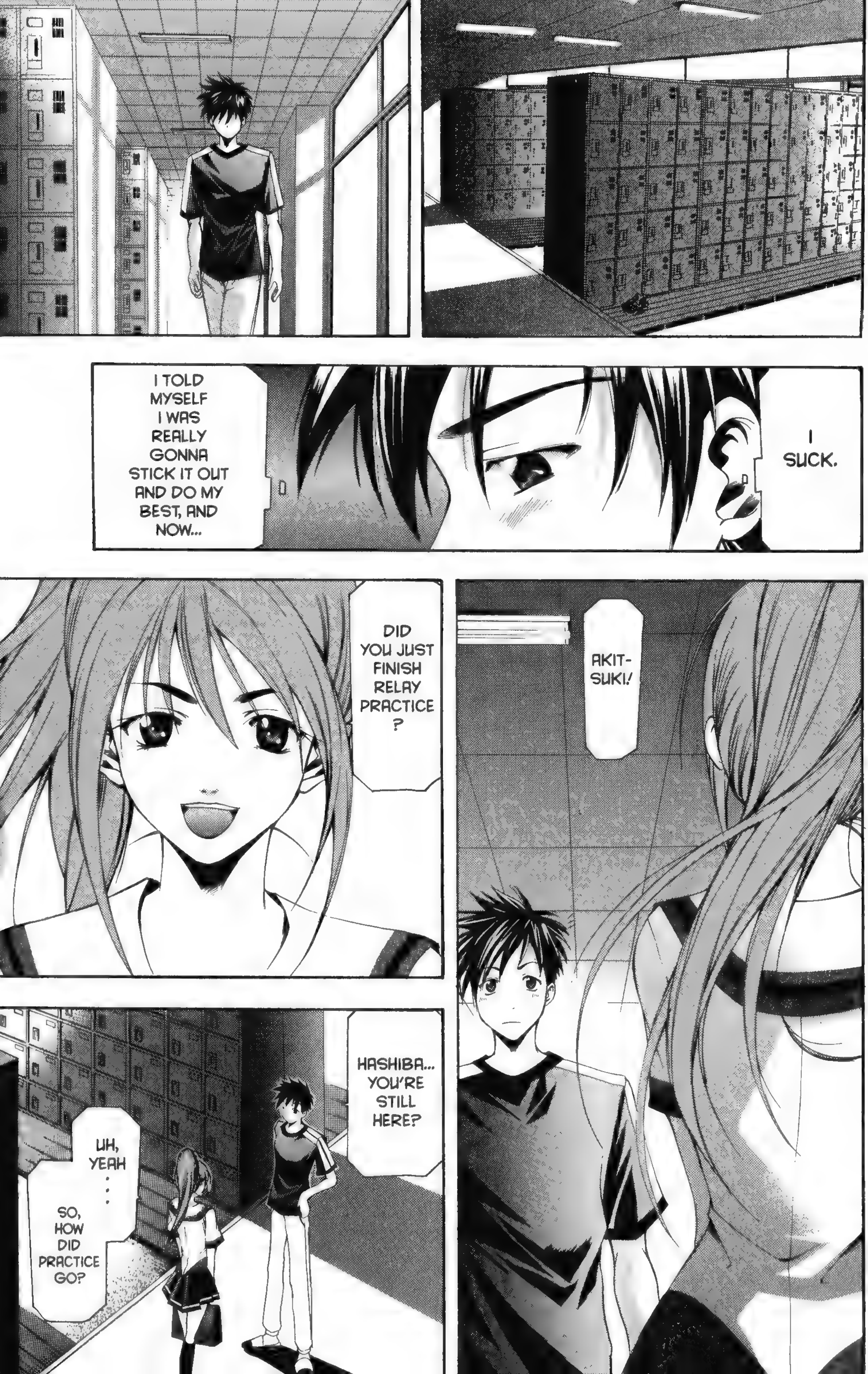
SUZUKA

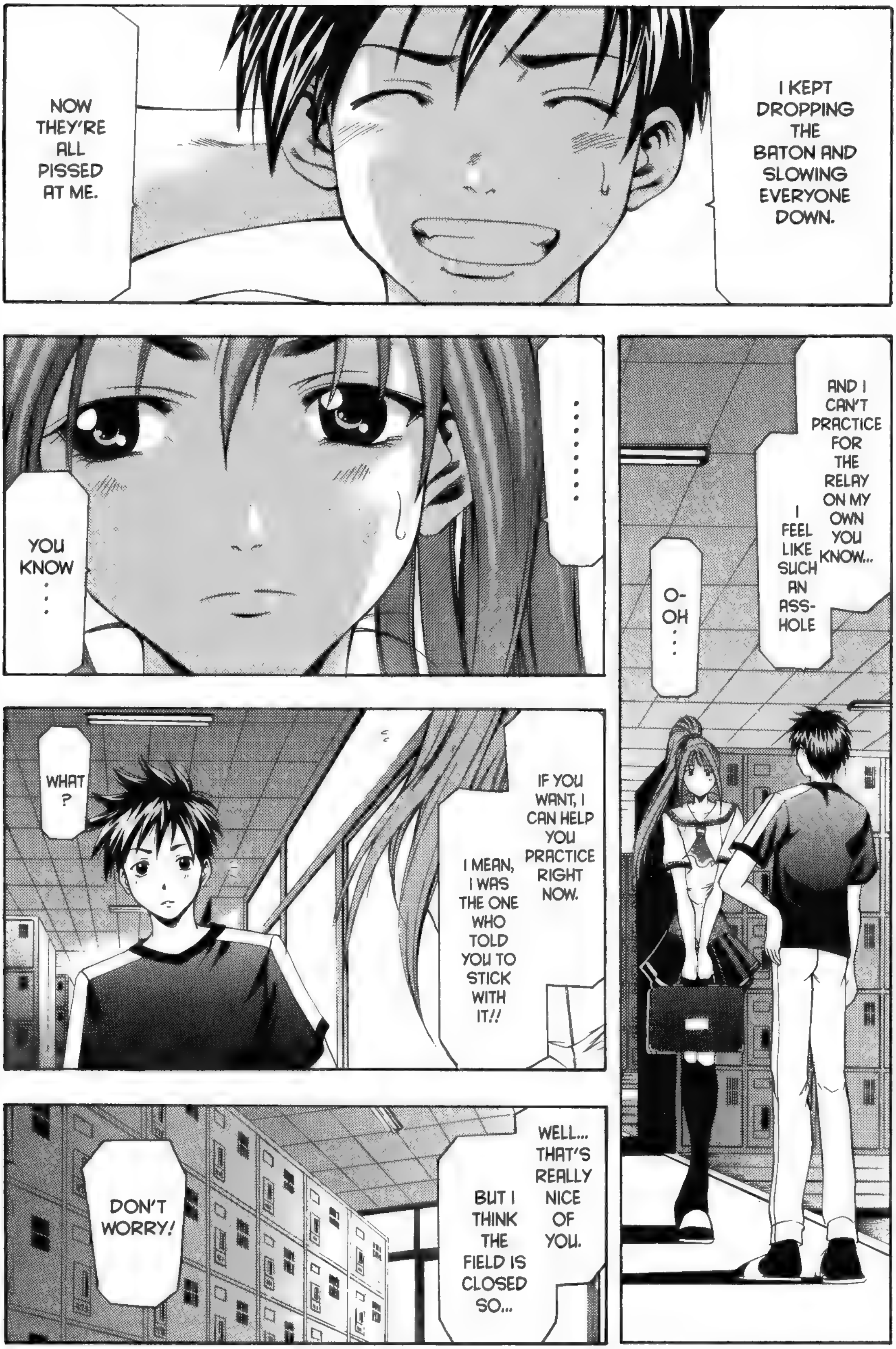
#56 TRUE INTENTION

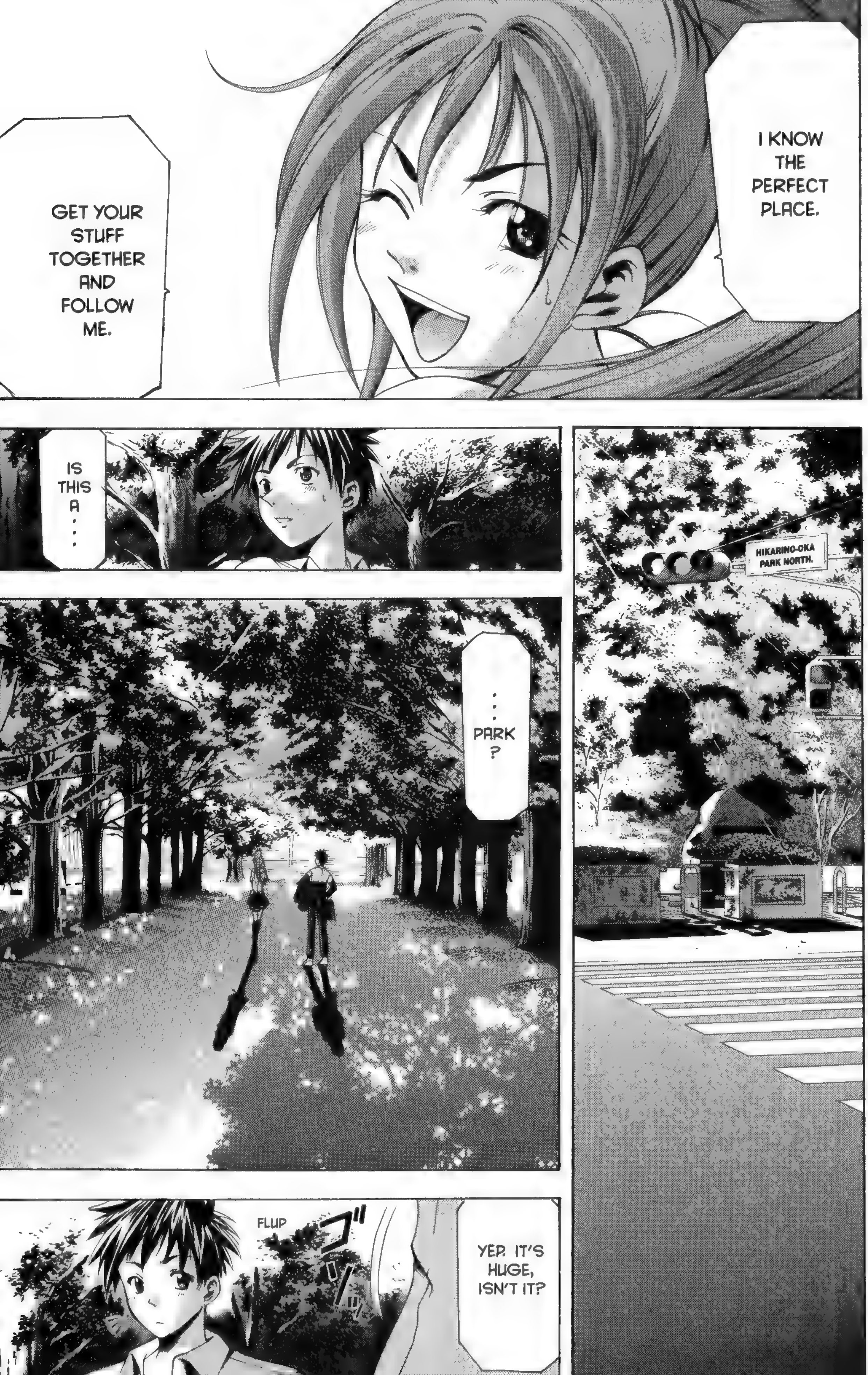


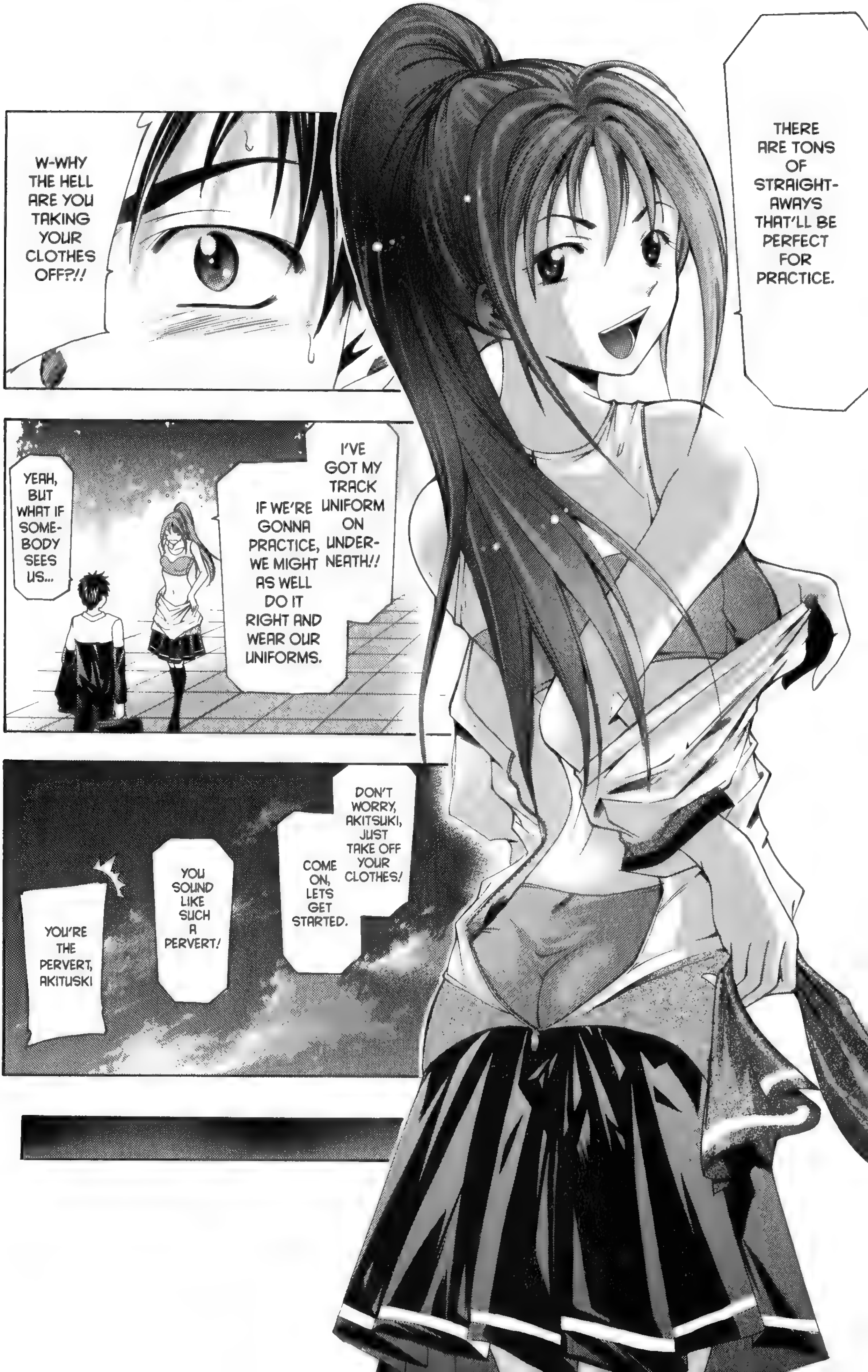

カッ
STEP
カッ
STEP
OKAY, I KNEW SHE HATED ME...
...BUT I DIDN'T THINK IT HAD GOTTEN THIS BAD.
ガッ
KALANK
ガッ
KALANK
OOPS...
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, AKITSUKI? YOU KEEP DROPPING THE BATON.
SORRY
SHIT...
HEY, MIYAMOTO, I KNOW HE'S FAST...
BUT HE CAN'T HANDLE A BATON FOR SHIT.
GIVE HIM A BREAK, SASAKI, AKITSUKI HARDLY HAS ANY EXPERIENCE WITH THIS STUFF.

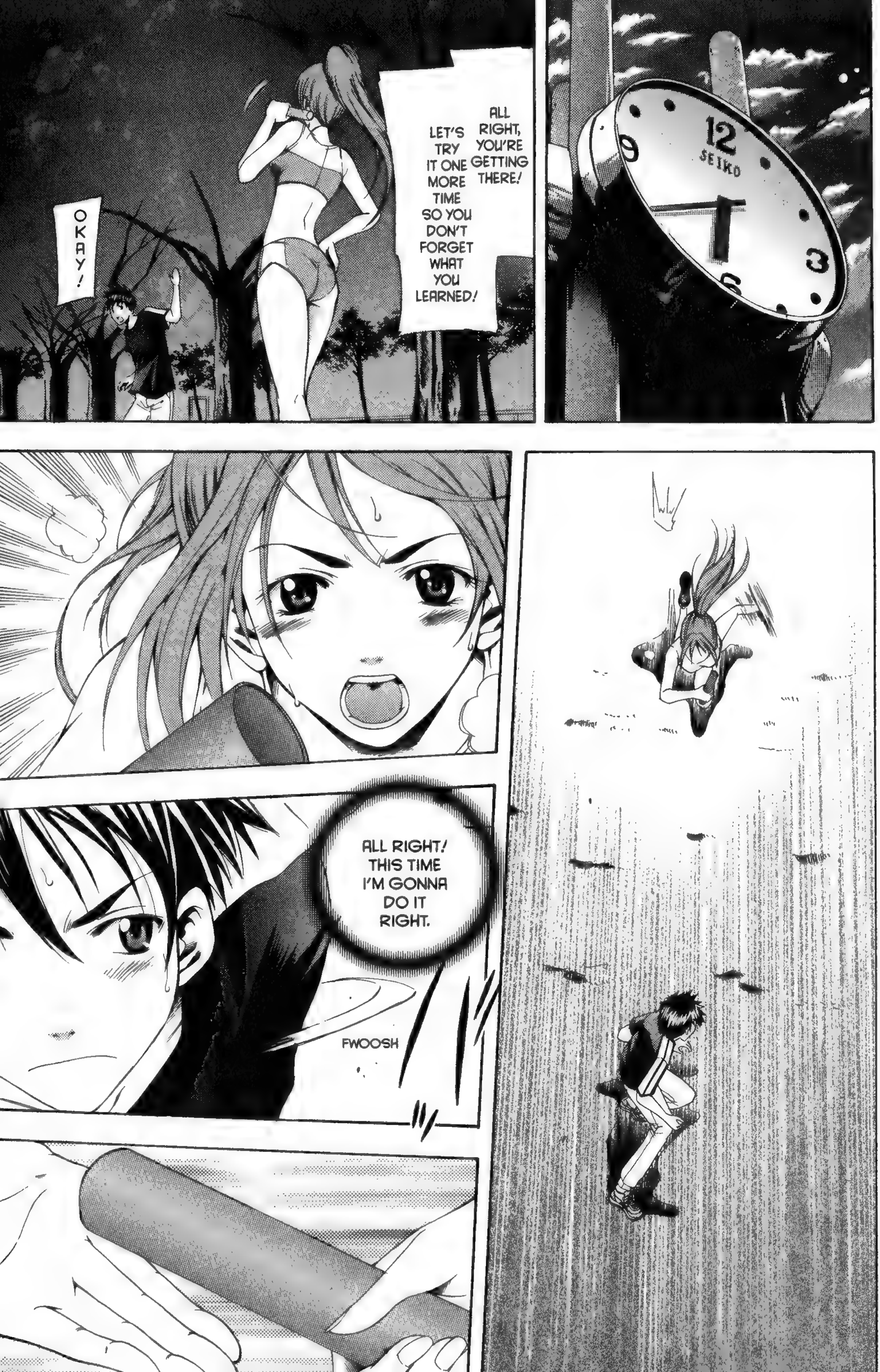

YEAH, WELL EVERYBODY STARTS OUT THAT WAY...
TSSS
BUT IF YOU ASK ME, HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S NOT EVEN TRYING.
THIS ISN'T JUST SOME PRACTICE RELAY, YOU KNOW? YOU'D BETTER START TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY
CHILL OUT, HE'S DOING THE BEST HE CAN.
...
ALL RIGHT!
....
SASAKI-SENPAI REALLY HATES YOU.
SHUT UP.
......
...AKITSUKI.

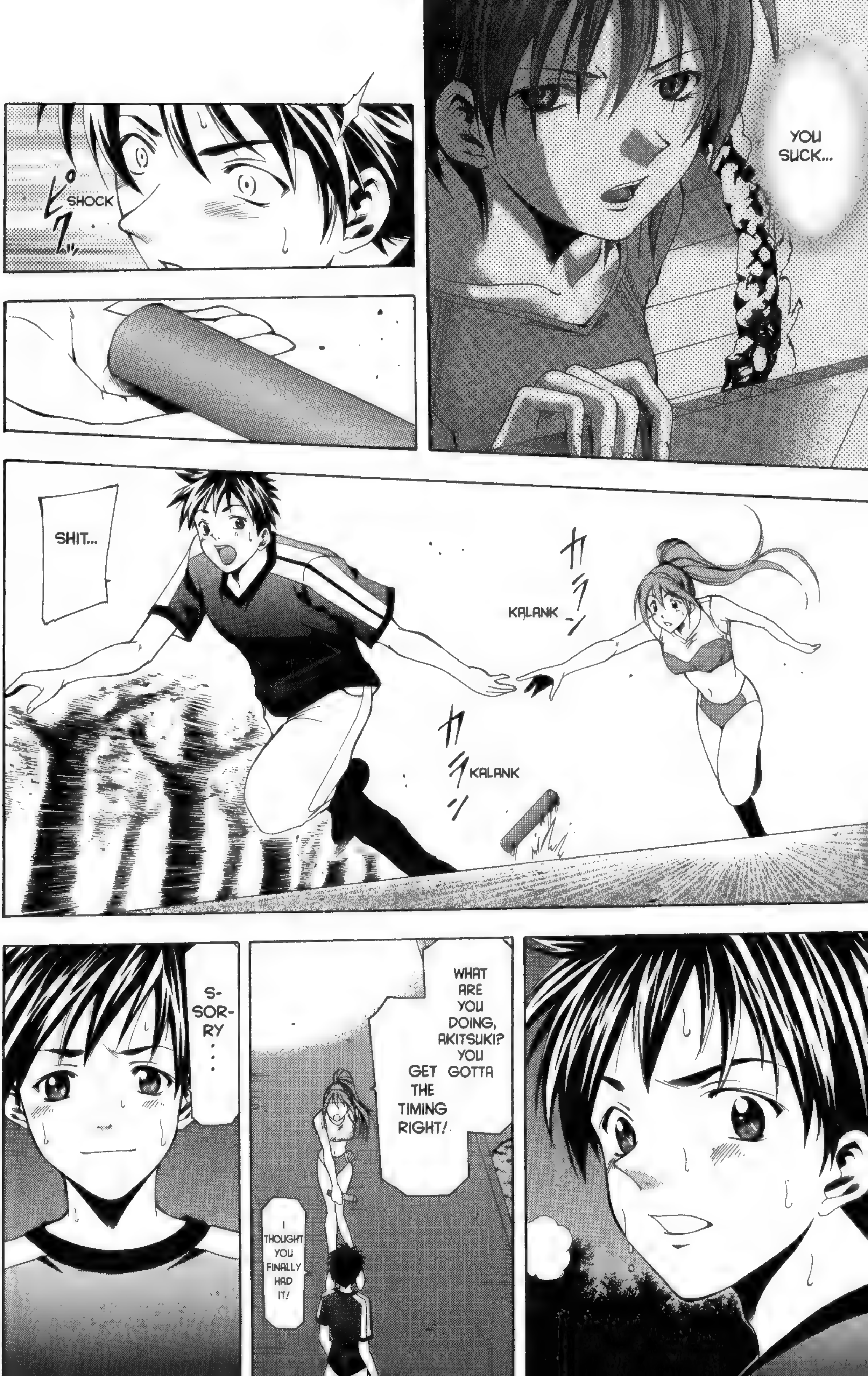

I SUCK.
I TOLD MYSELF I WAS REALLY GONNA STICK IT OUT AND DO MY BEST, AND NOW...
AKITSUKI!
DID YOU JUST FINISH RELAY PRACTICE?
HASHIBA... YOU'RE STILL HERE?
UH, YEAH...
SO, HOW DID PRACTICE GO?

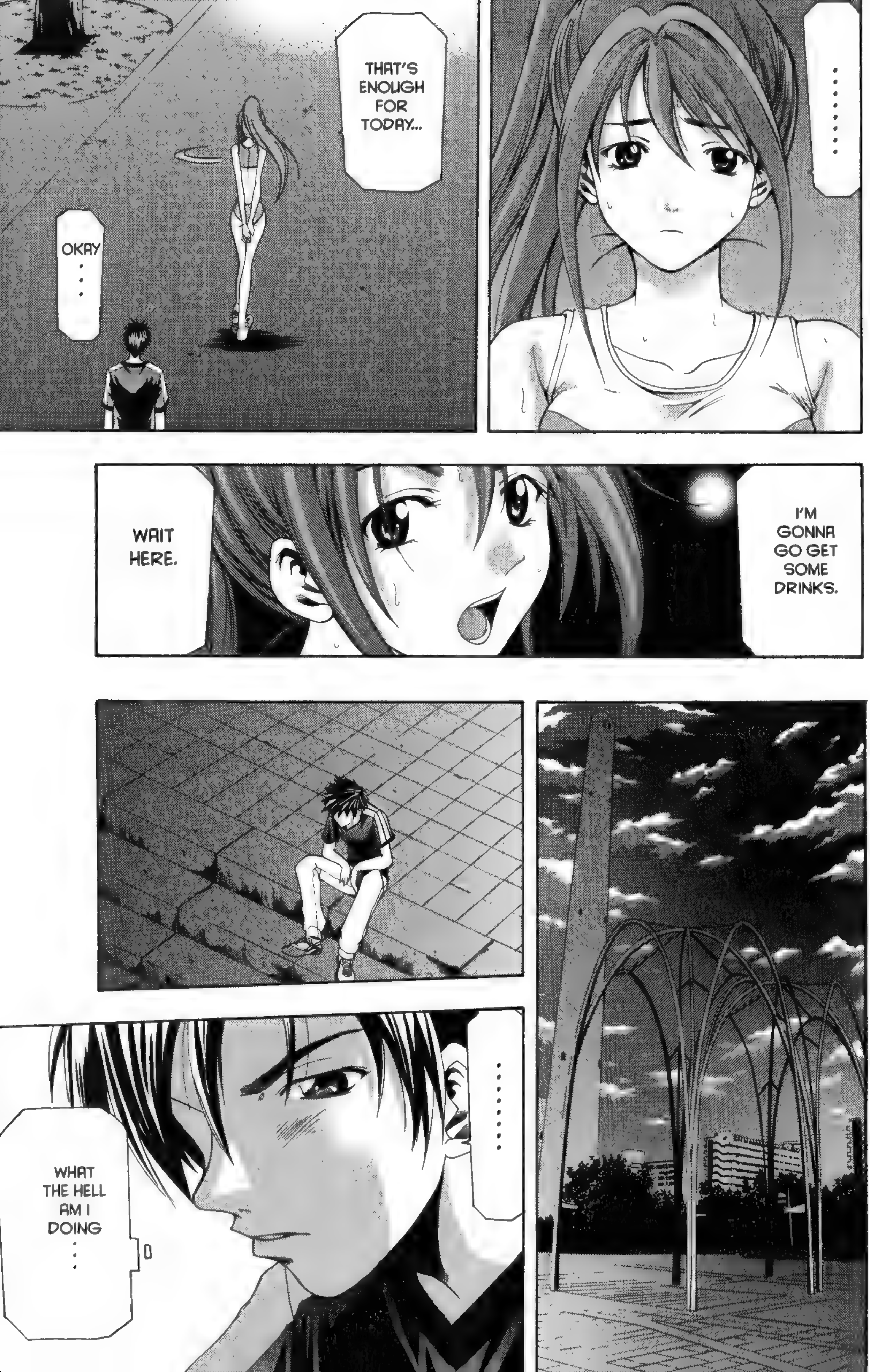

I KEPT DROPPING THE BATON AND SLOWING EVERYONE DOWN.
NOW THEY'RE ALL PISSED AT ME.
AND I CAN'T PRACTICE FOR THE RELAY ON MY OWN YOU KNOW...
I FEEL LIKE SUCH AN ASS-HOLE
O-OH...
....
YOU KNOW...
IF YOU WANT, I CAN HELP YOU PRACTICE RIGHT NOW.
I MEAN, I WAS THE ONE WHO TOLD YOU TO STICK WITH IT!!
WHAT?
WELL... THAT'S REALLY NICE OF YOU.
BUT I THINK THE FIELD IS CLOSED SO...
DON'T WORRY!

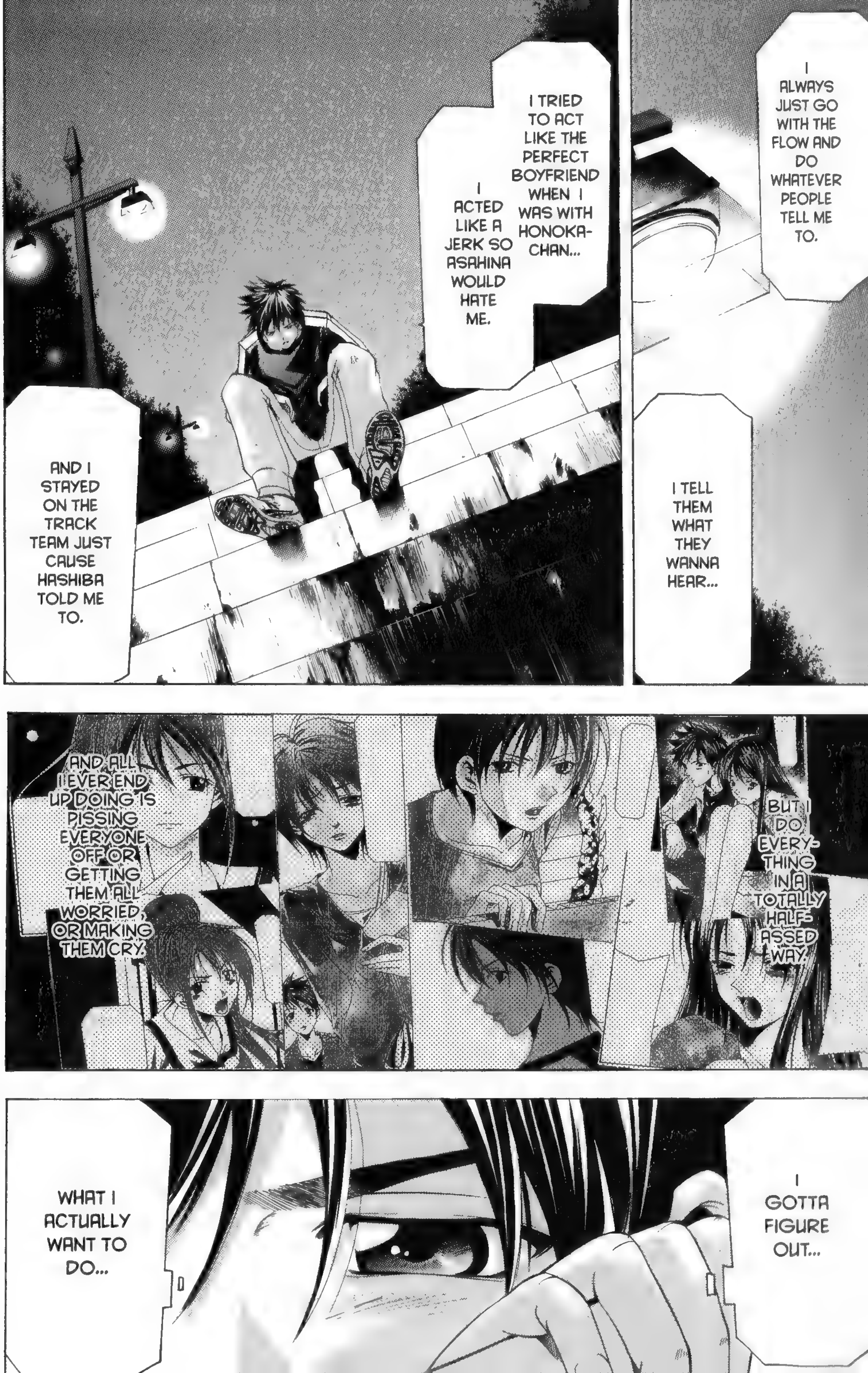

I KNOW THE PERFECT PLACE.
GET YOUR STUFF TOGETHER AND FOLLOW ME.
HIKARINO-OKA PARK NORTH.
IS THIS A . . .
. . . PARK?
YEP. IT'S HUGE, ISN'T IT?
FLUP

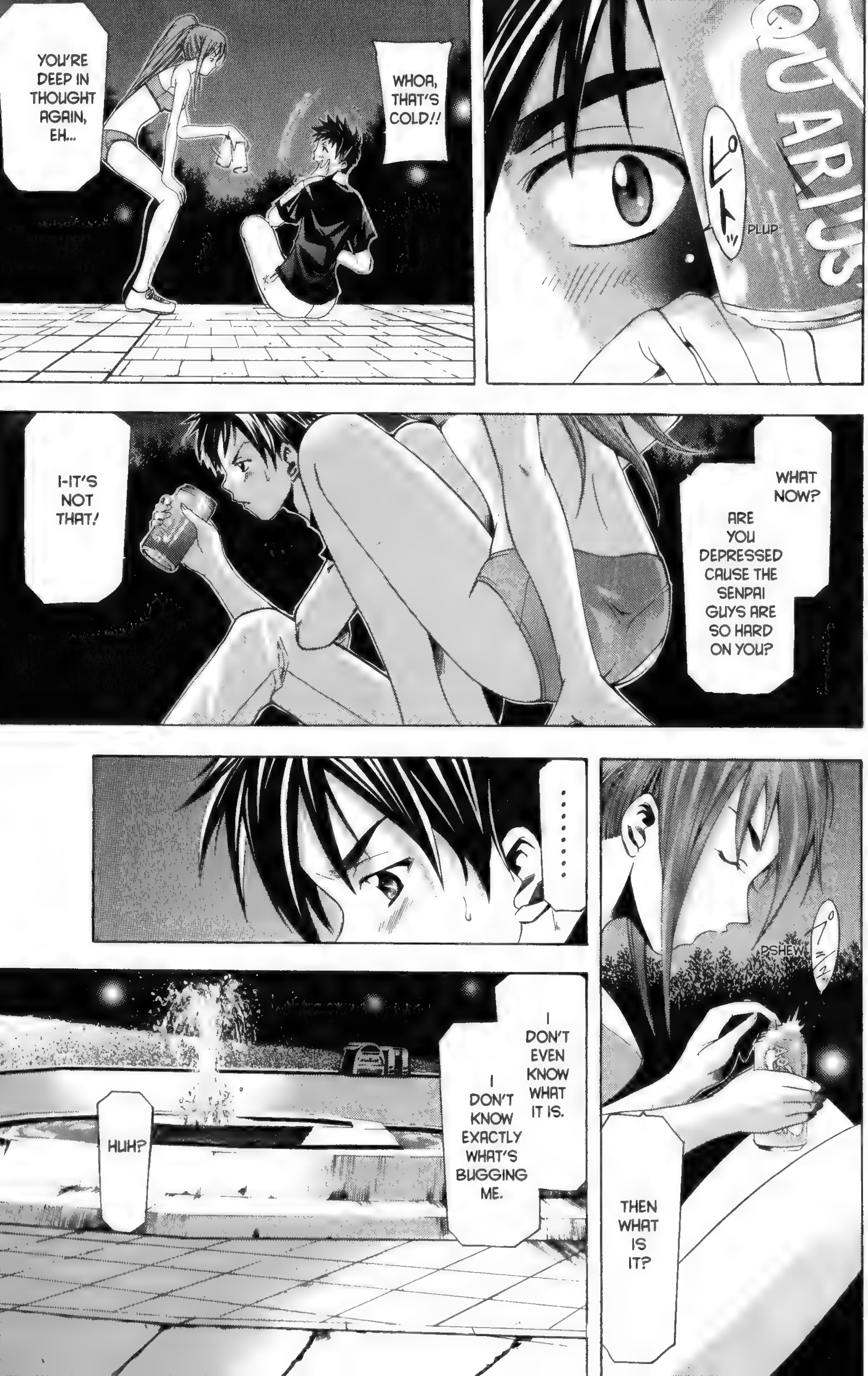

THERE ARE TONS OF STRAIGHT-AWAYS THAT'LL BE PERFECT FOR PRACTICE.
W-WHY THE HELL ARE YOU TAKING YOUR CLOTHES OFF?!!
I'VE GOT MY TRACK UNIFORM ON UNDERNEATH!!
IF WE'RE GONNA PRACTICE, WE MIGHT AS WELL DO IT RIGHT AND WEAR OUR UNIFORMS.
YEAH, BUT WHAT IF SOMEBODY SEES US...
DON'T WORRY, AKITSUKI, JUST TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES!
COME ON, LETS GET STARTED.
YOU SOUND LIKE SUCH A PERVERT!
YOU'RE THE PERVERT, AKITUSKI

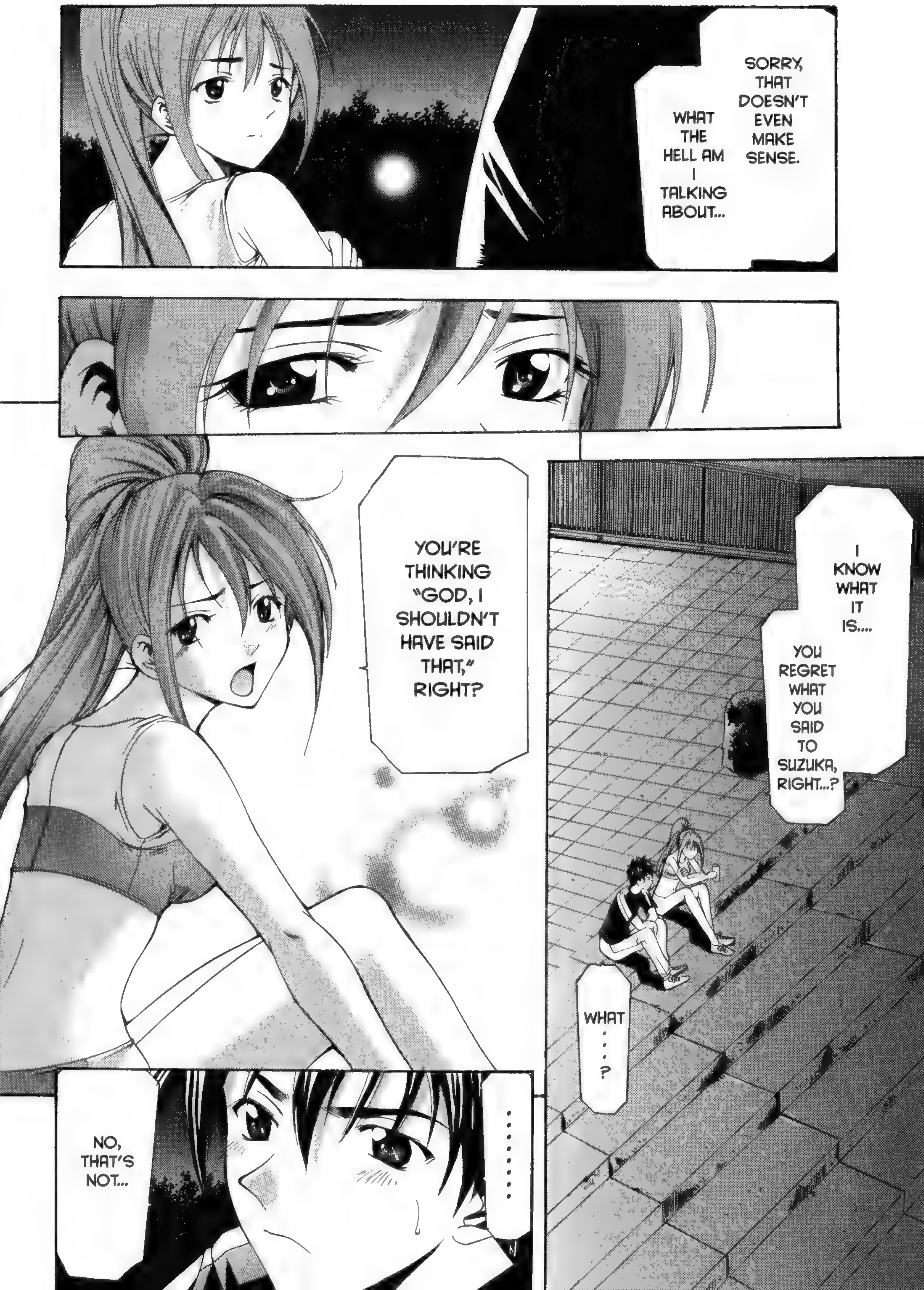

ALL RIGHT, YOU'RE GETTING THERE!
LET'S TRY IT ONE MORE TIME SO YOU DON'T FORGET WHAT YOU LEARNED!
OKAY!
ALL RIGHT! THIS TIME I'M GONNA DO IT RIGHT.
FWOOSH

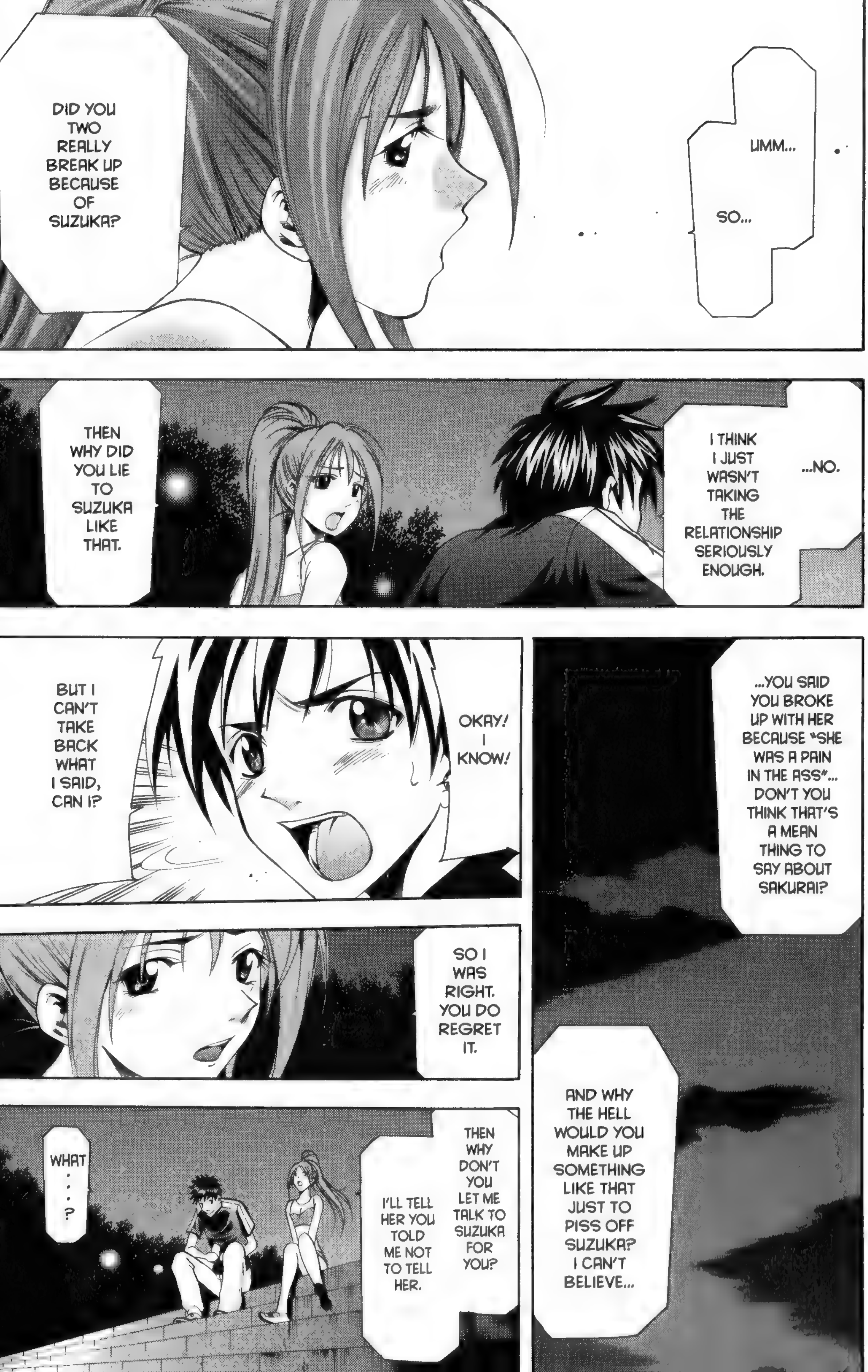

YOU SUCK...
SHOCK
SHIT...
KALANK
KALANK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, AKITSUKI? YOU GOTTA GET THE TIMING RIGHT!
I THOUGHT YOU FINALLY HAD IT!
S-SORRY...

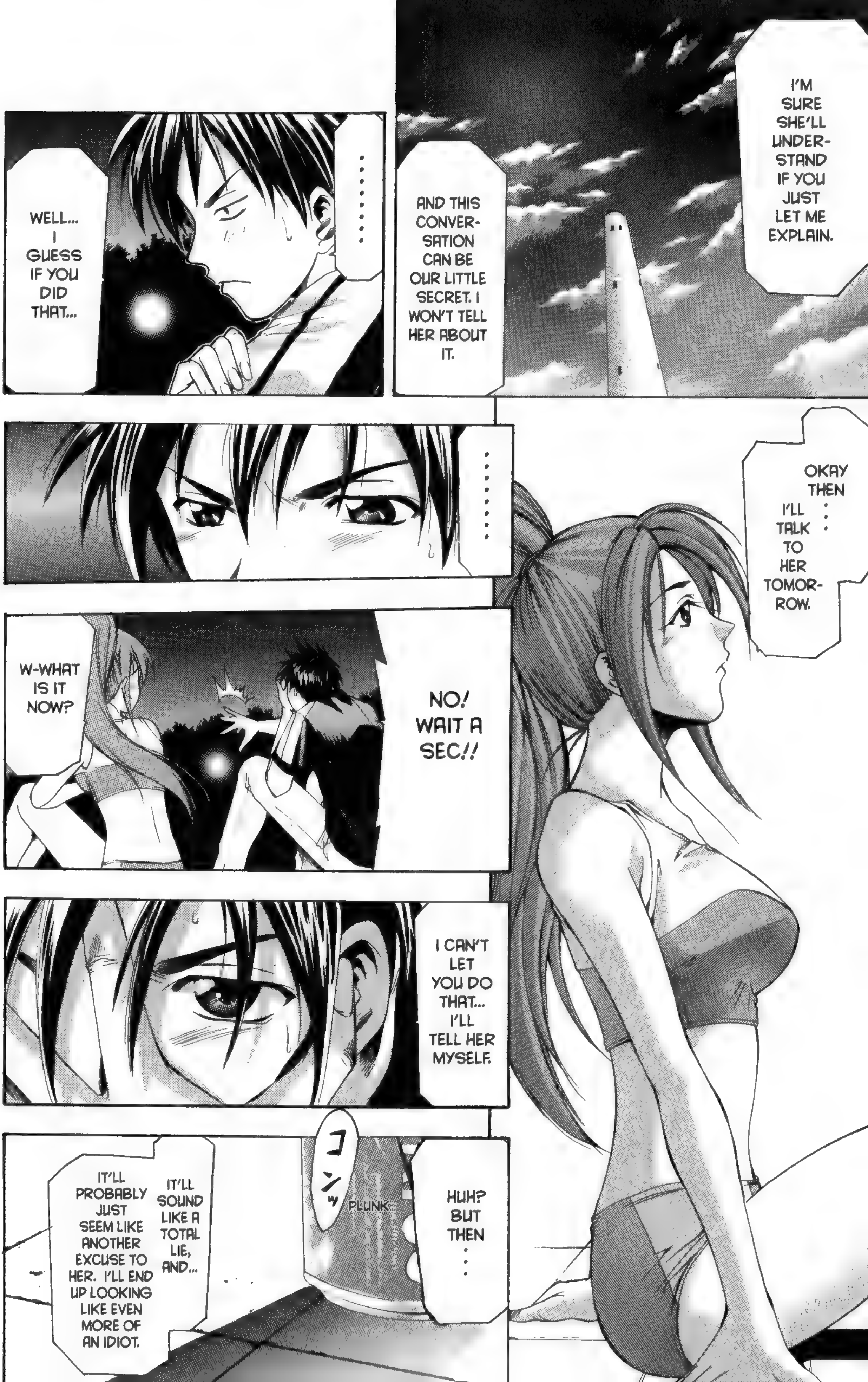

....
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY...
OKAY....
I'M GONNA GO GET SOME DRINKS.
WAIT HERE.
....
WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING...

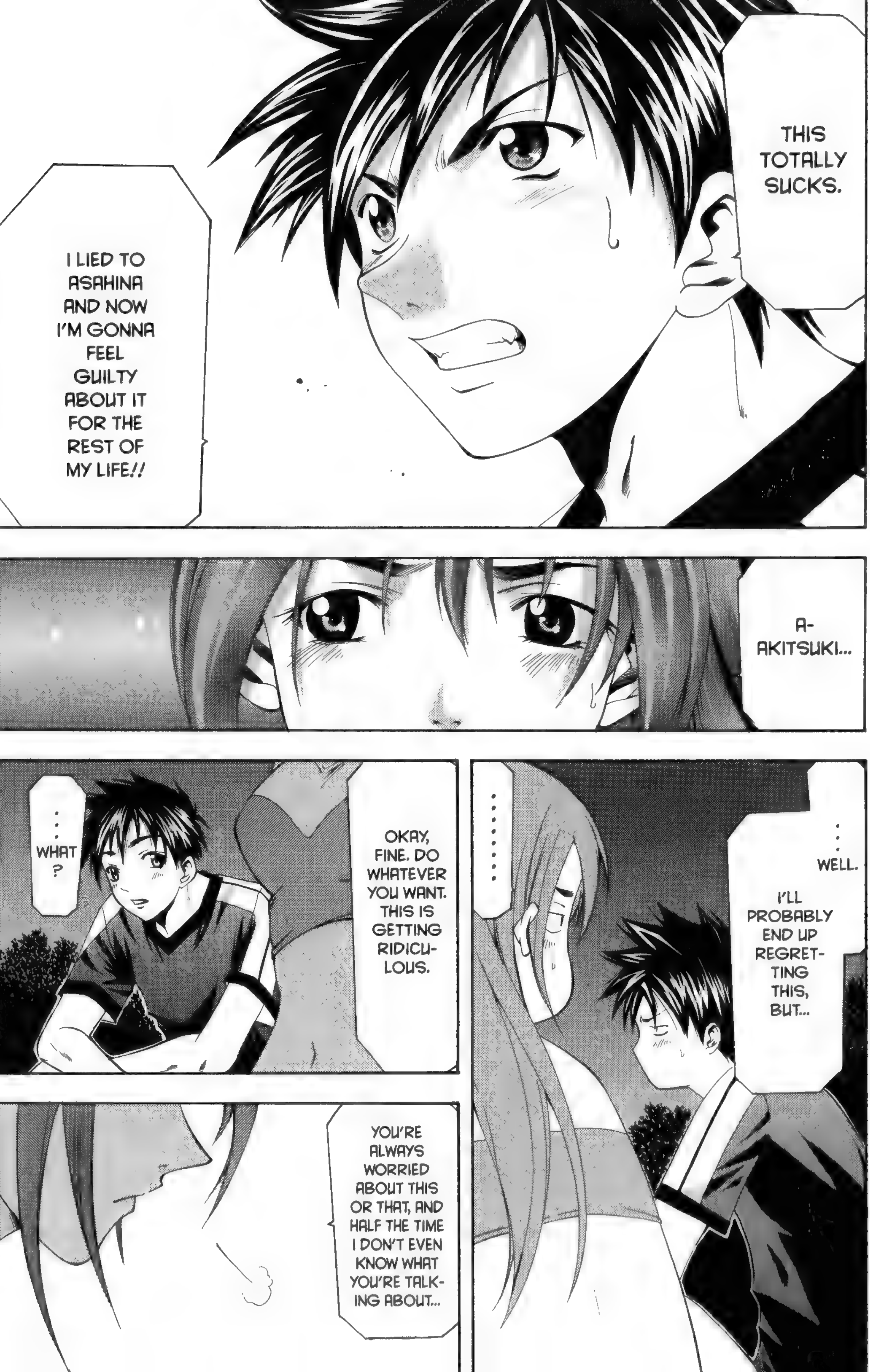

I ALWAYS JUST GO WITH THE FLOW AND DO WHATEVER PEOPLE TELL ME TO.
I TELL THEM WHAT THEY WANNA HEAR...
I TRIED TO ACT LIKE THE PERFECT BOYFRIEND WHEN I WAS WITH HONOKA-CHAN...
I ACTED LIKE A JERK SO ASAHINA WOULD HATE ME.
AND I STAYED ON THE TRACK TEAM JUST CAUSE HASHIBA TOLD ME TO.
BUT I DO EVERYTHING IN A TOTALLY HALF-ASSED WAY.
AND ALL I EVER END UP DOING IS PISSING EVERYONE OFF OR GETTING THEM ALL WORRIED, OR MAKING THEM CRY.
I GOTTA FIGURE OUT...
WHAT I ACTUALLY WANT TO DO...

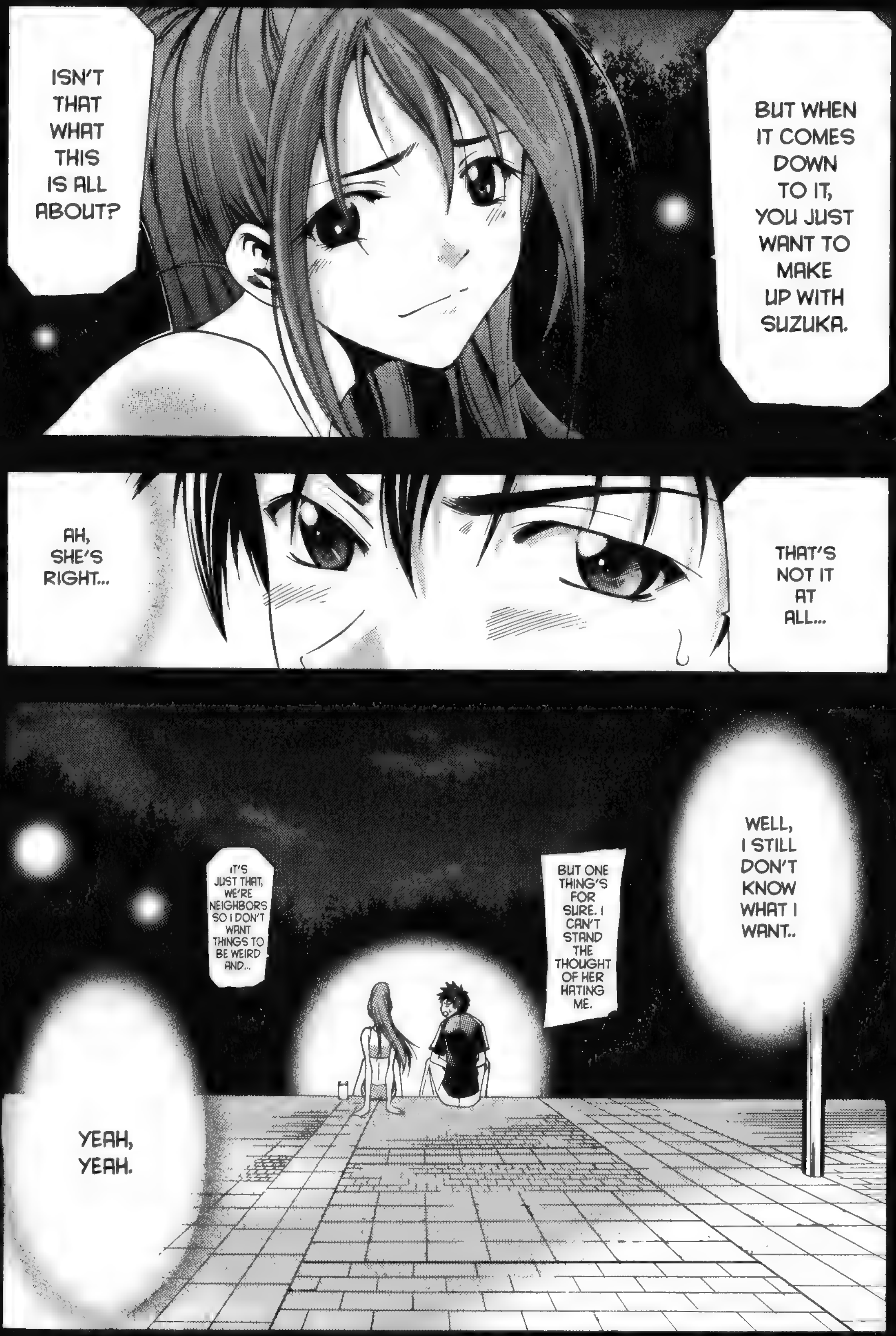

QUARIUS
ピトッ
PLUP
WHOA, THAT'S COLD!!
YOU'RE DEEP IN THOUGHT AGAIN, EH...
WHAT NOW? ARE YOU DEPRESSED CAUSE THE SENPAI GUYS ARE SO HARD ON YOU?
I-IT'S NOT THAT!
......
プシュ
PSHEW
THEN WHAT IS IT?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT IS.
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT'S BUGGING ME.
HUH?


SORRY, THAT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE.
WHAT THE HELL AM I TALKING ABOUT...
I KNOW WHAT IT IS....
YOU REGRET WHAT YOU SAID TO SUZUKA, RIGHT...?
WHAT...?
YOU'RE THINKING "GOD, I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT," RIGHT?
....
NO, THAT'S NOT...

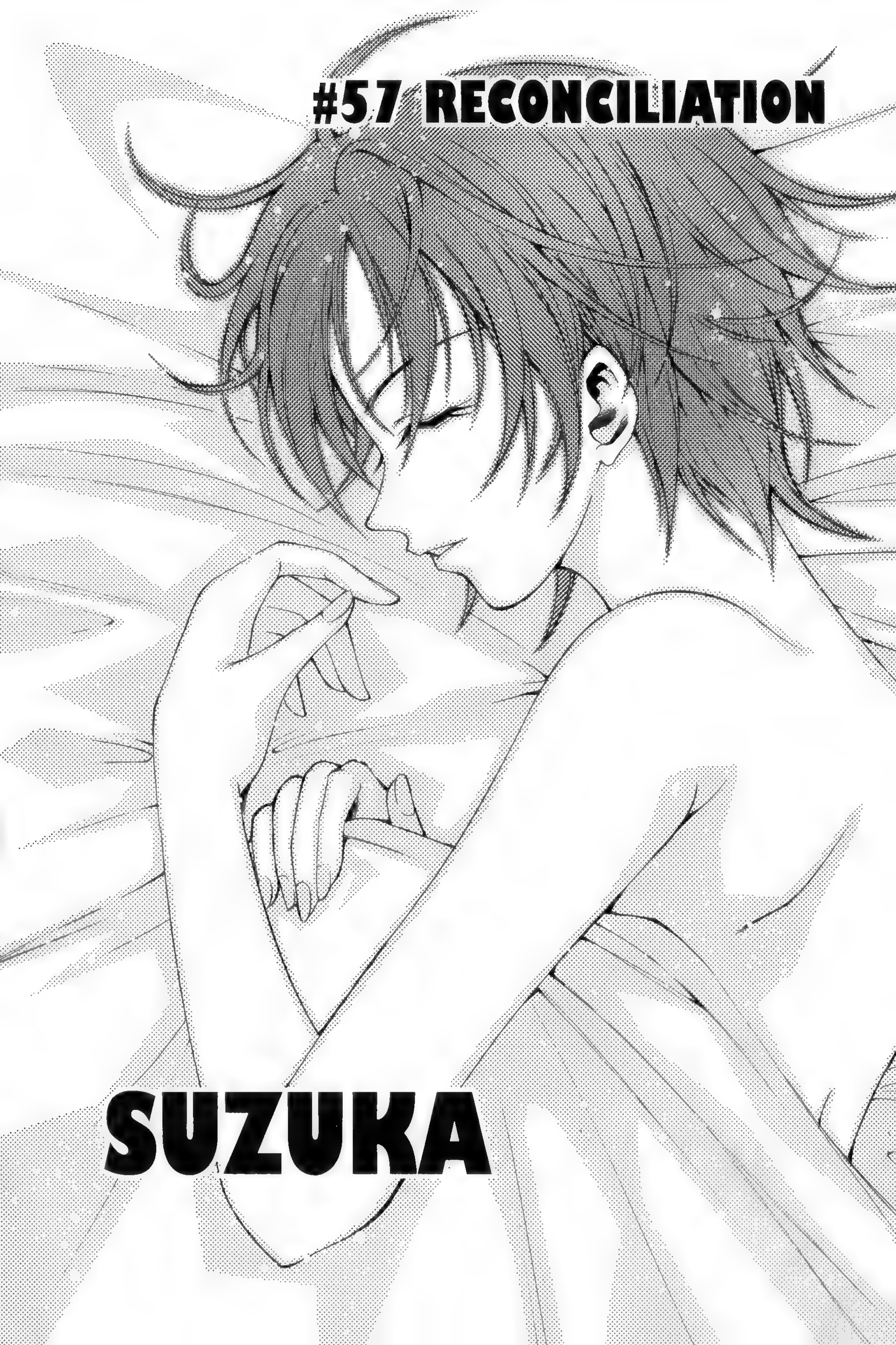

UMM...
SO...
DID YOU TWO REALLY BREAK UP BECAUSE OF SUZUKA?
...NO.
I THINK I JUST WASN'T TAKING THE RELATIONSHIP SERIOUSLY ENOUGH.
THEN WHY DID YOU LIE TO SUZUKA LIKE THAT.
...YOU SAID YOU BROKE UP WITH HER BECAUSE "SHE WAS A PAIN IN THE ASS"... DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S A MEAN THING TO SAY ABOUT SAKURAI?
AND WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU MAKE UP SOMETHING LIKE THAT JUST TO PISS OFF SUZUKA? I CAN'T BELIEVE...
OKAY! I KNOW!
BUT I CAN'T TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID, CAN I?
SO I WAS RIGHT. YOU DO REGRET IT.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU LET ME TALK TO SUZUKA FOR YOU?
I'LL TELL HER YOU TOLD ME NOT TO TELL HER.
WHAT...?


I'M SURE SHE'LL UNDERSTAND IF YOU JUST LET ME EXPLAIN.
AND THIS CONVERSATION CAN BE OUR LITTLE SECRET. I WON'T TELL HER ABOUT IT.
....
WELL... I GUESS IF YOU DID THAT...
OKAY THEN... I'LL TALK TO HER TOMORROW.
....
NO! WAIT A SEC!!
W-WHAT IS IT NOW?
I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT... I'LL TELL HER MYSELF.
HUH? BUT THEN...
コンッ
PLUNK
IT'LL SOUND LIKE A TOTAL LIE, AND...
IT'LL PROBABLY JUST SEEM LIKE ANOTHER EXCUSE TO HER. I'LL END UP LOOKING LIKE EVEN MORE OF AN IDIOT.
...

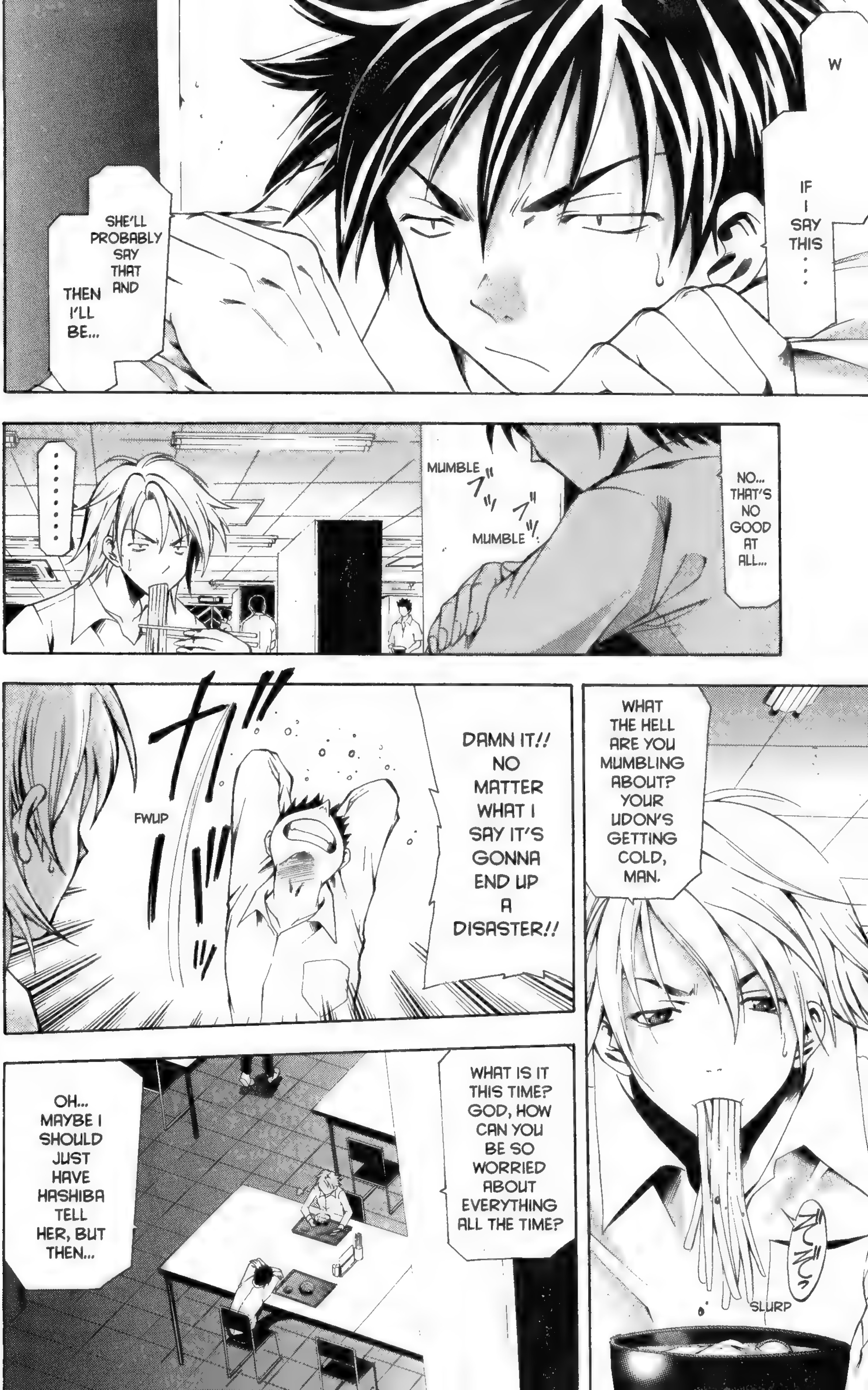

THIS TOTALLY SUCKS.
I LIED TO ASAHINA AND NOW I'M GONNA FEEL GUILTY ABOUT IT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!!
A- AKITSUKI...
... WELL.
I'LL PROBABLY END UP REGRETTING THIS, BUT...
....
OKAY, FINE. DO WHATEVER YOU WANT. THIS IS GETTING RIDICULOUS.
... WHAT ?
YOU'RE ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT THIS OR THAT, AND HALF THE TIME I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...

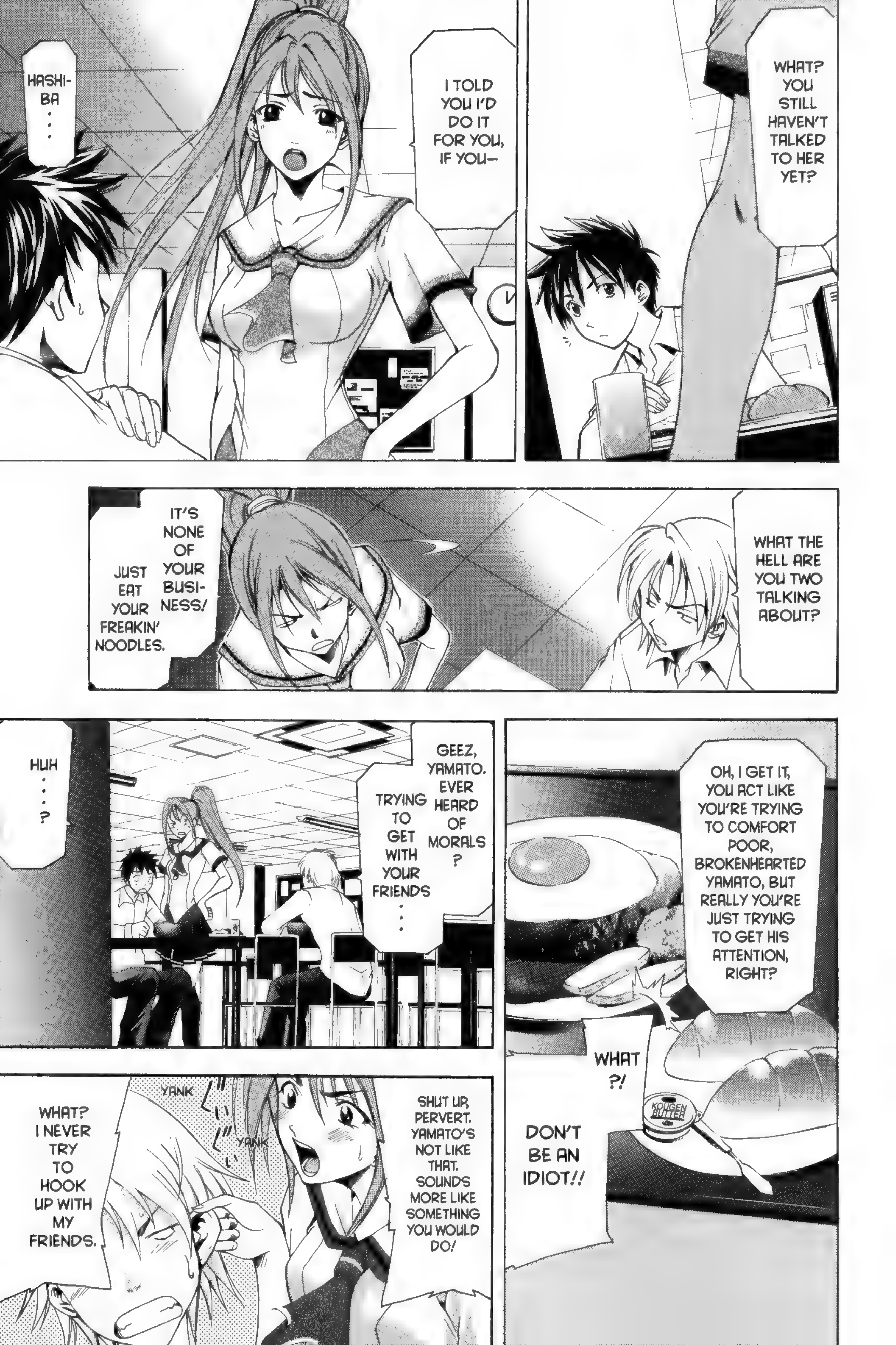

BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT, YOU JUST WANT TO MAKE UP WITH SUZUKA.
ISN'T THAT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL...
AH, SHE'S RIGHT...
WELL, I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT..
BUT ONE THING'S FOR SURE. I CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF HER HATING ME.
IT'S JUST THAT, WE'RE NEIGHBORS SO I DON'T WANT THINGS TO BE WEIRD AND...
YEAH, YEAH.

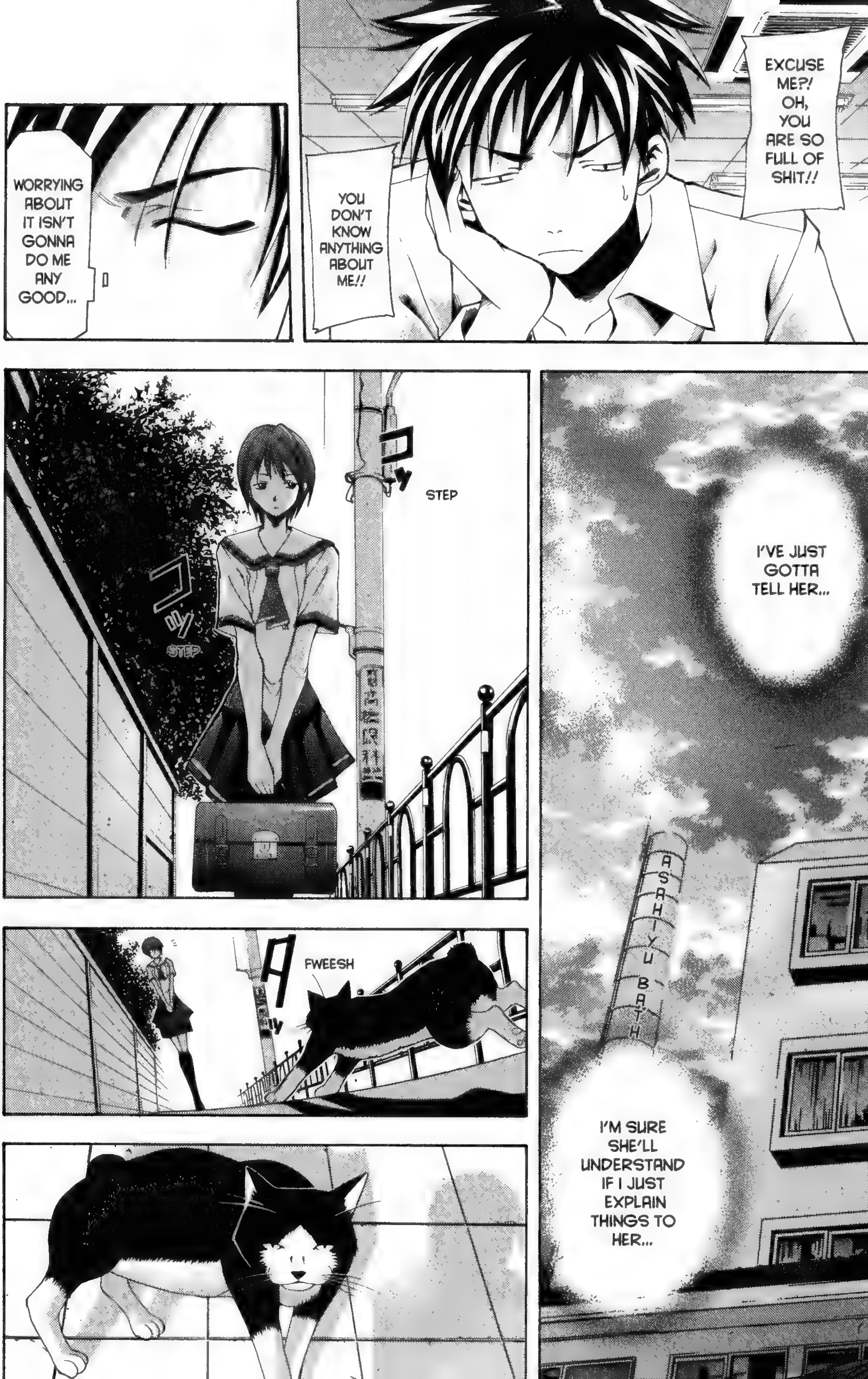
#57 RECONCILIATION

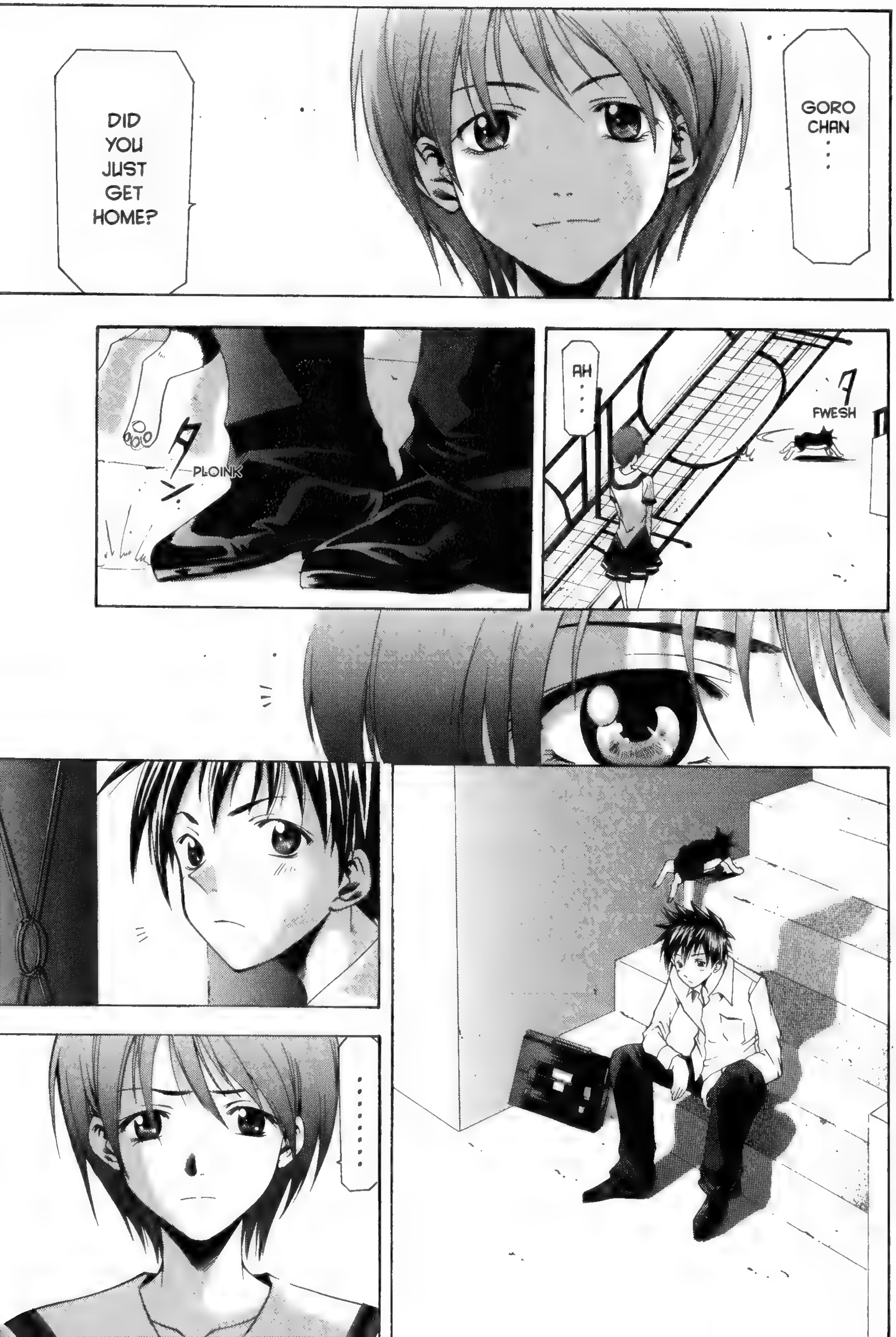


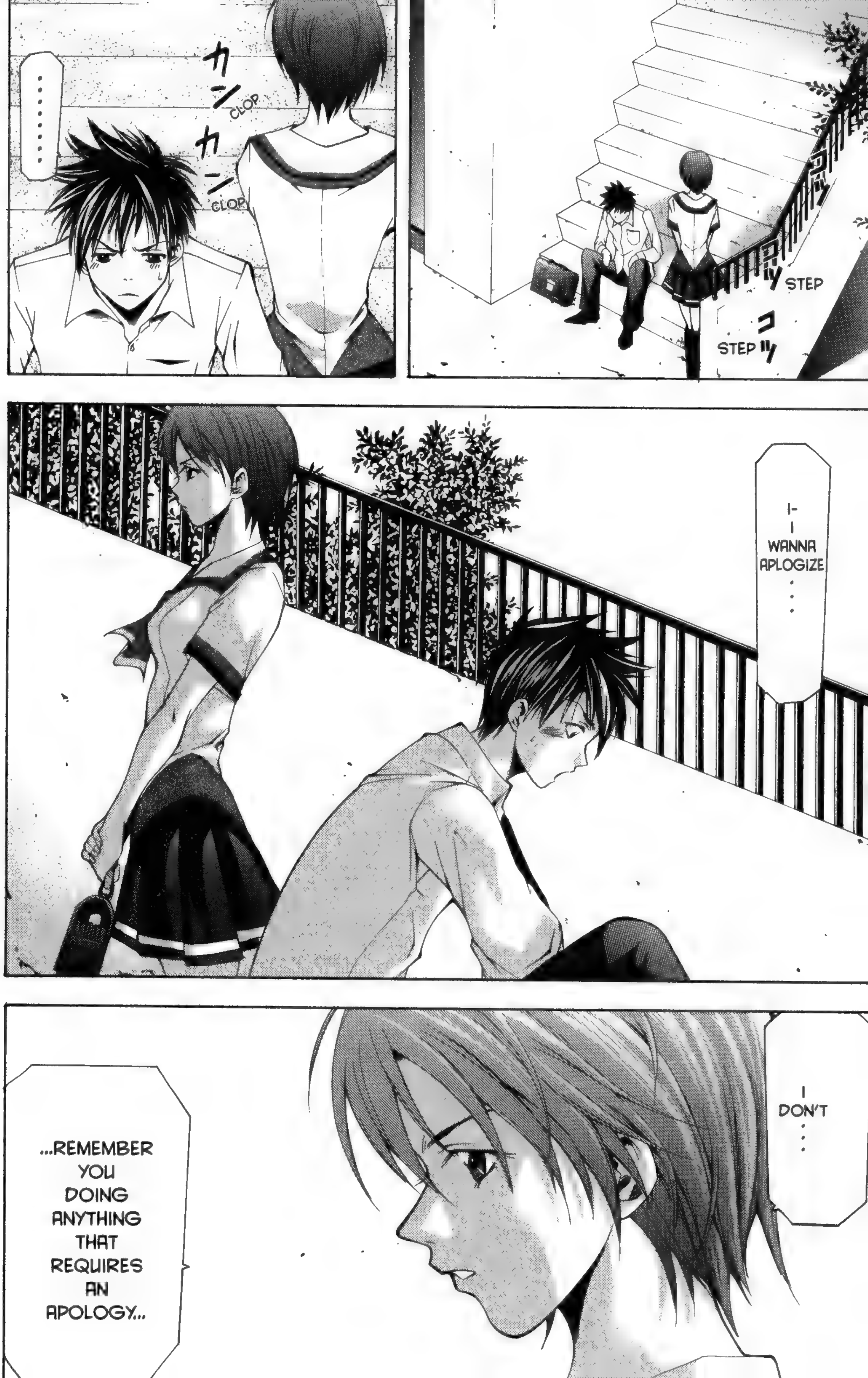
SUZUKA

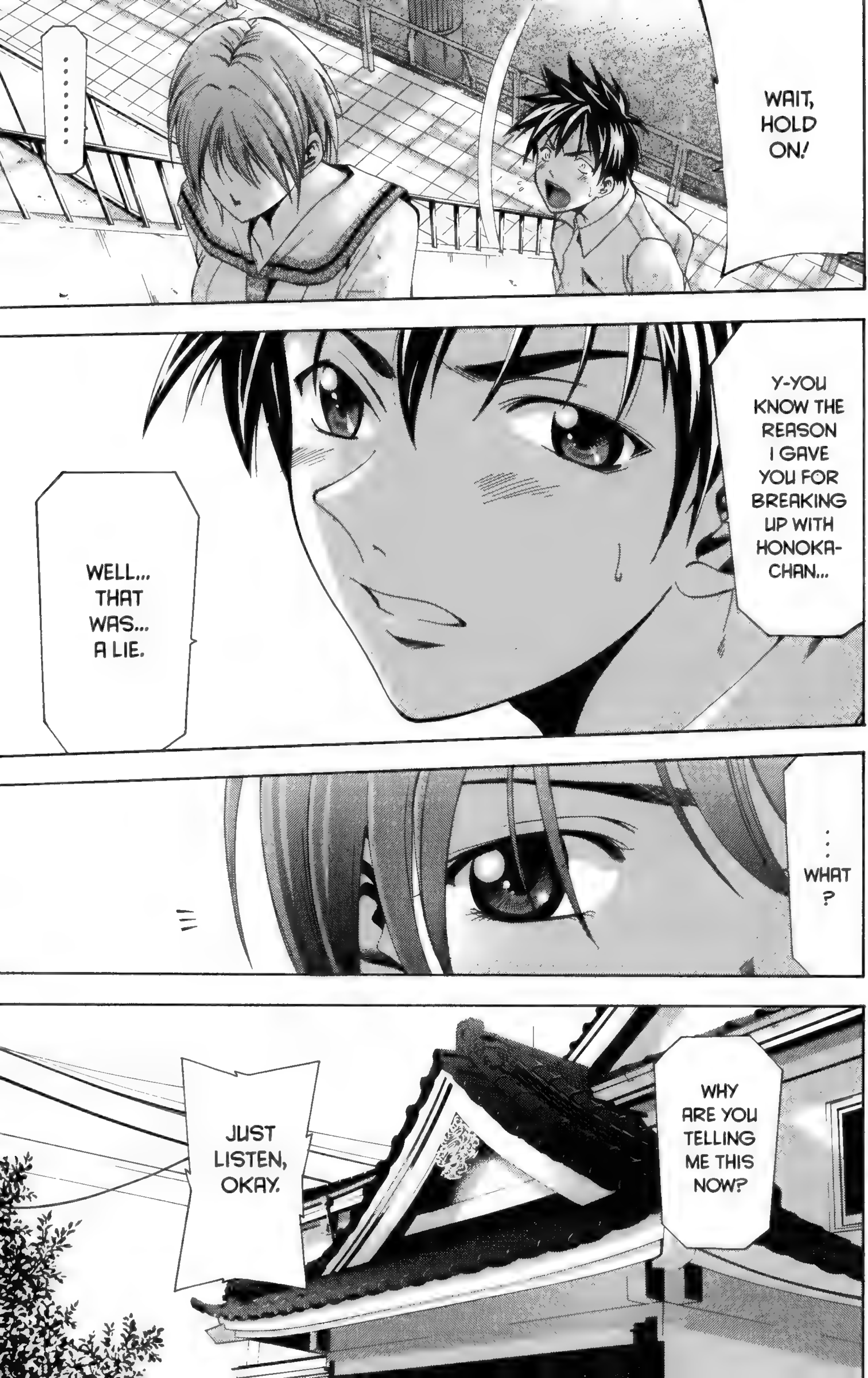

W
IF I SAY THIS...
SHE'LL PROBABLY SAY THAT AND
THEN I'LL BE...
NO... THAT'S NO GOOD AT ALL...
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
......
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU MUMBLING ABOUT? YOUR UDON'S GETTING COLD, MAN.
DAMN IT!! NO MATTER WHAT I SAY IT'S GONNA END UP A DISASTER!!
FWUP
SLURP
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME? GOD, HOW CAN YOU BE SO WORRIED ABOUT EVERYTHING ALL THE TIME?
OH... MAYBE I SHOULD JUST HAVE HASHIBA TELL HER, BUT THEN...

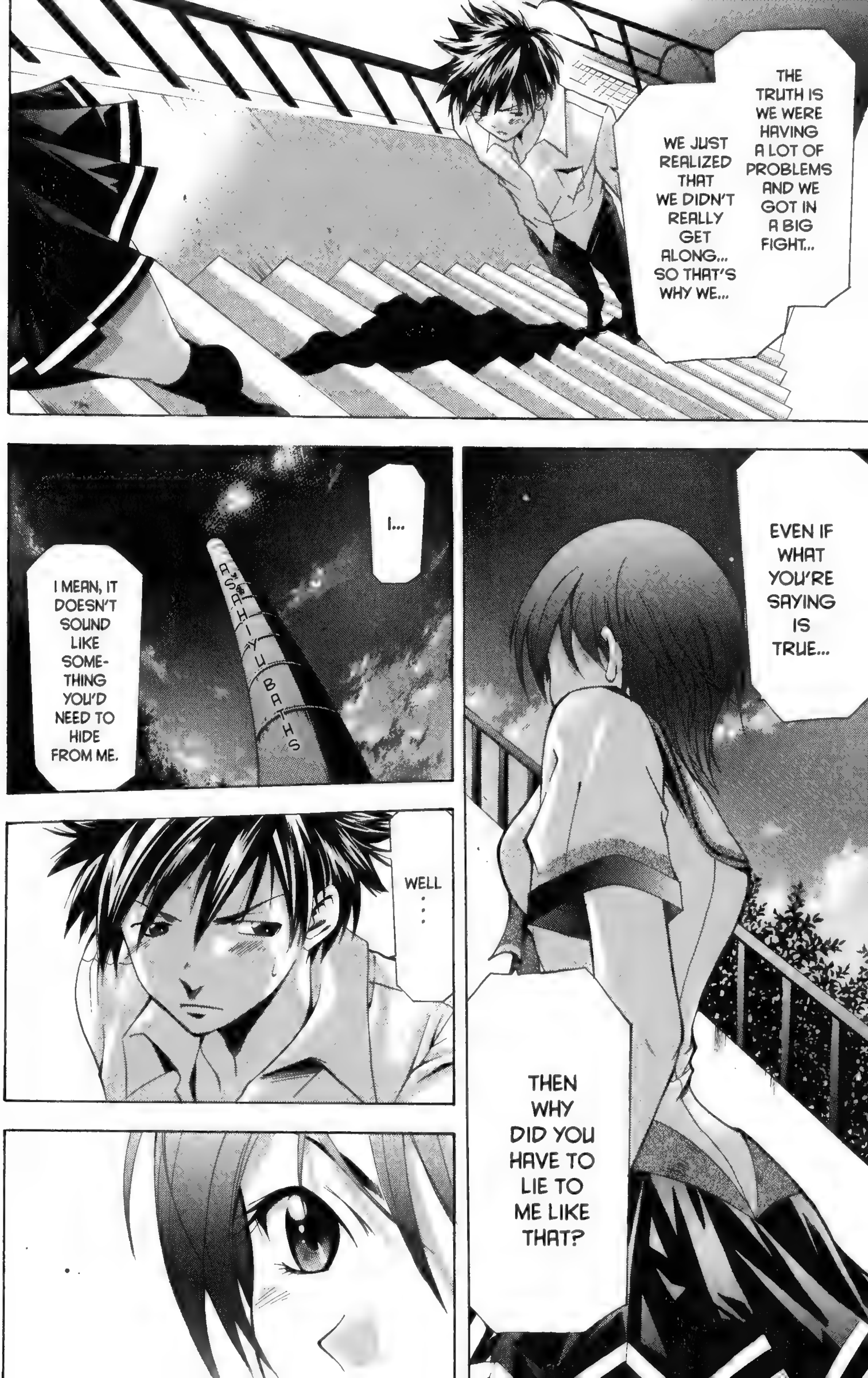

WHAT? YOU STILL HAVEN'T TALKED TO HER YET?
I TOLD YOU I'D DO IT FOR YOU, IF YOU—
HASHIBA . . .
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?
IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!
JUST EAT YOUR FREAKIN' NOODLES.
OH, I GET IT, YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO COMFORT POOR, BROKENHEARTED YAMATO, BUT REALLY YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO GET HIS ATTENTION, RIGHT?
GEEZ, YAMATO. EVER HEARD OF MORALS?
TRYING TO GET WITH YOUR FRIENDS . . .
HUH . . . ?
WHAT ?!
DON'T BE AN IDIOT!!
KOUGEN BUTTER
SHUT UP, PERVERT. YAMATO'S NOT LIKE THAT. SOUNDS MORE LIKE SOMETHING YOU WOULD DO!
YANK
YANK
WHAT? I NEVER TRY TO HOOK UP WITH MY FRIENDS.

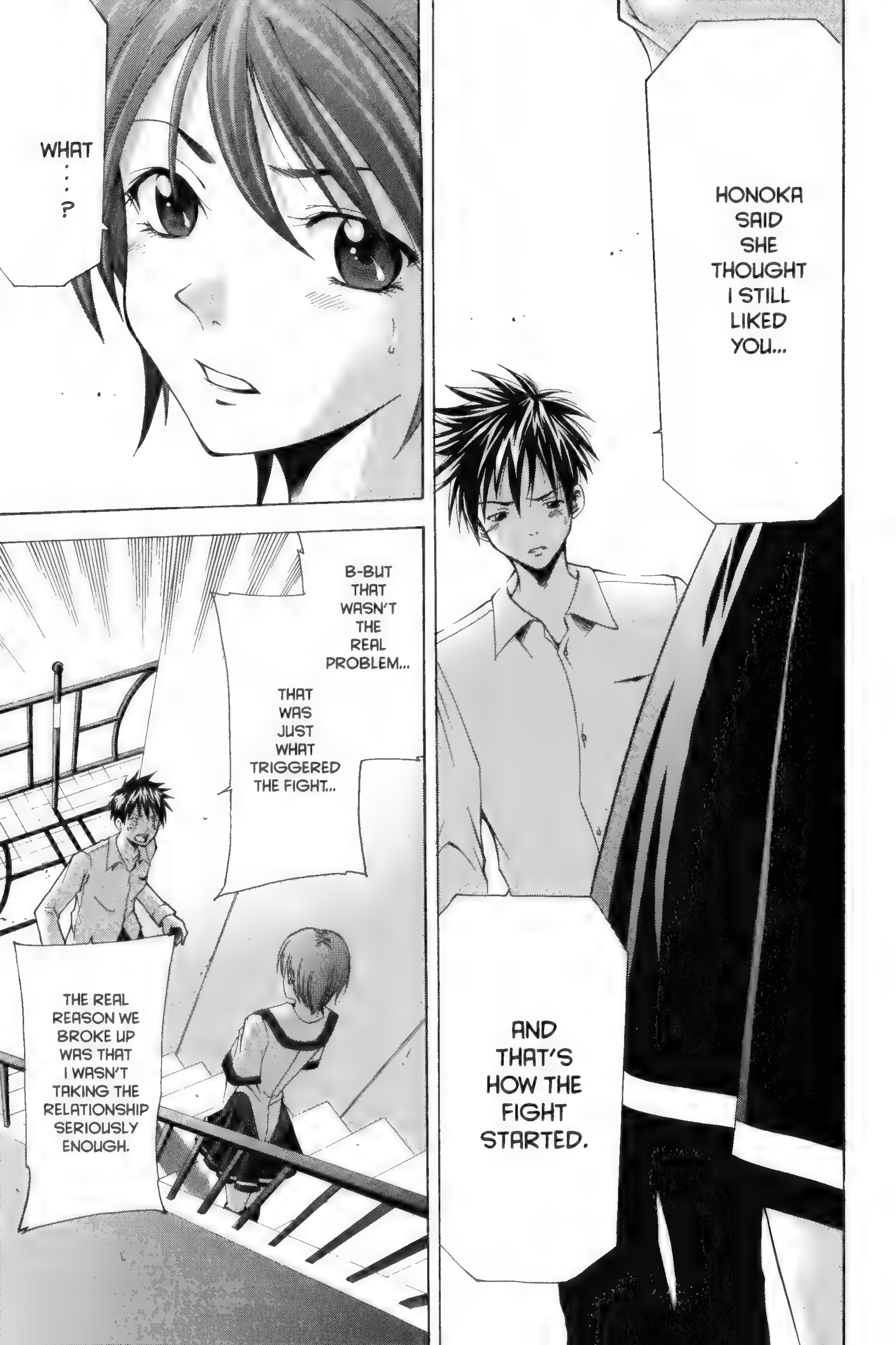

EXCUSE ME?! OH, YOU ARE SO FULL OF SHIT!!
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ME!!
WORRYING ABOUT IT ISN'T GONNA DO ME ANY GOOD...
I'VE JUST GOTTA TELL HER...
ASAHI YU BATH
I'M SURE SHE'LL UNDERSTAND IF I JUST EXPLAIN THINGS TO HER...
STEP
STEP
FWEESH

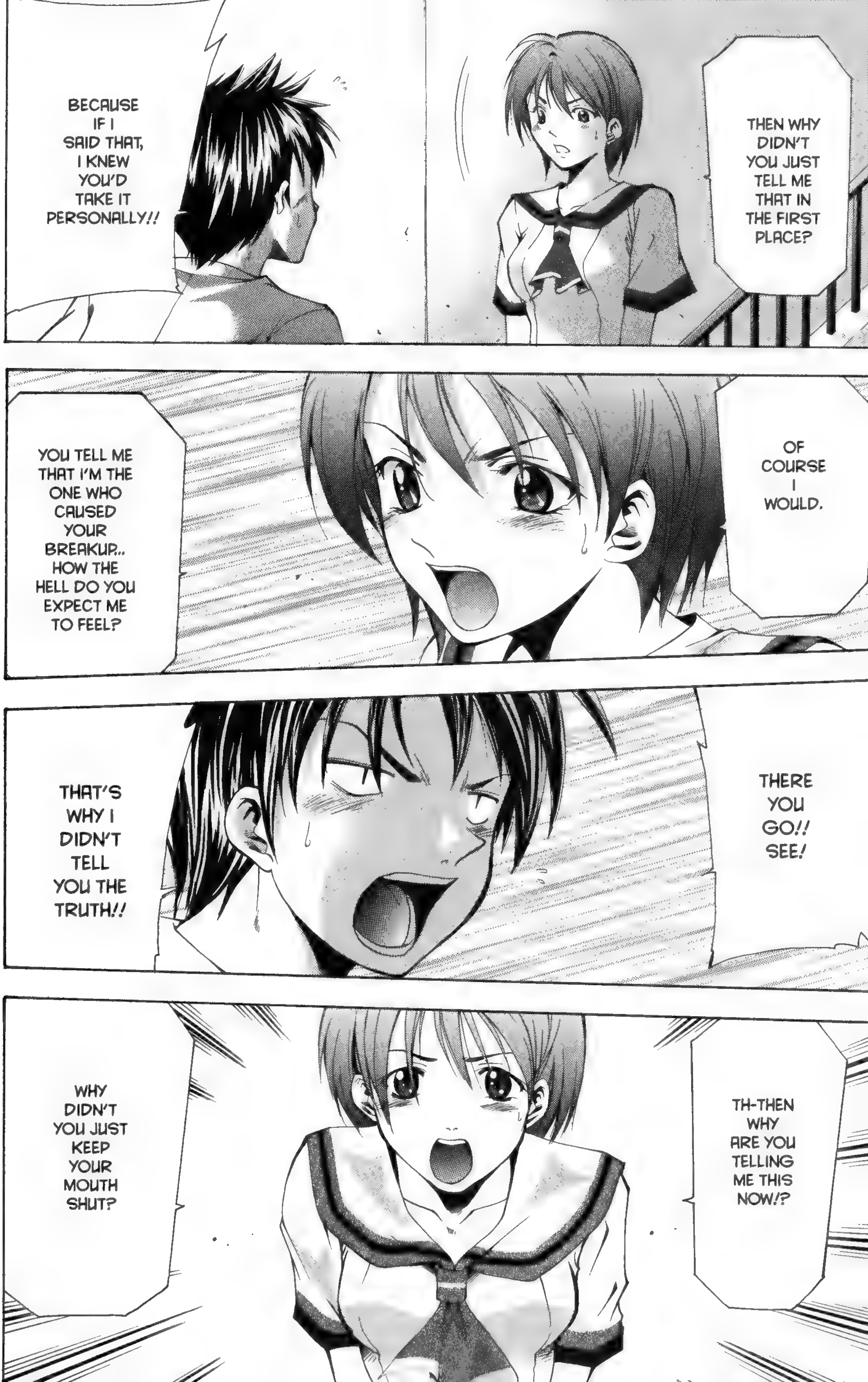

GORO CHAN ...
DID YOU JUST GET HOME?
AH ...
FWESH
PLOINK
......

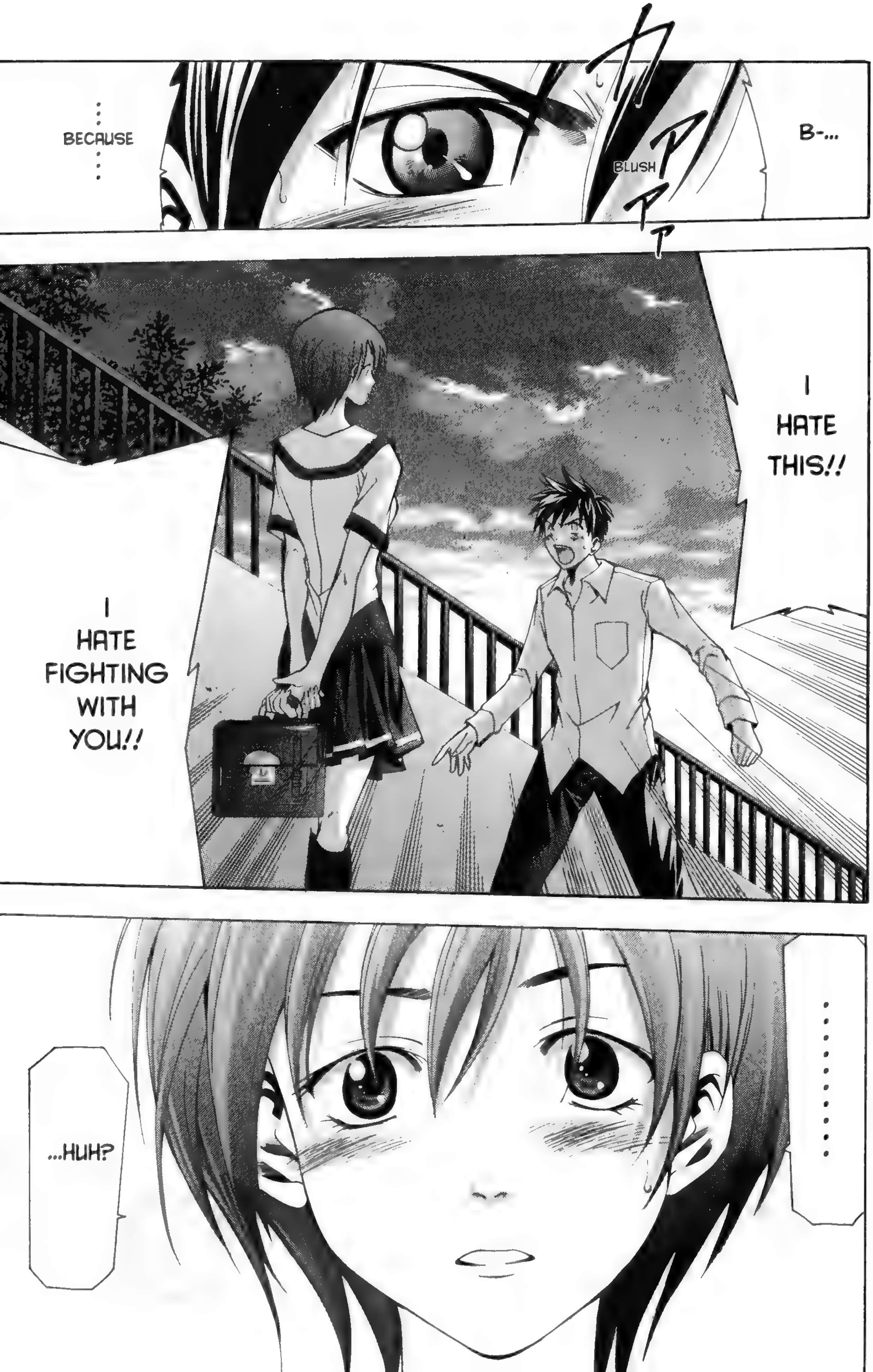

コツ STEP
コツ STEP
カン CLOP
カン CLOP
……
I- I WANNA APLOGIZE . . .
I DON'T . . .
...REMEMBER YOU DOING ANYTHING THAT REQUIRES AN APOLOGY...

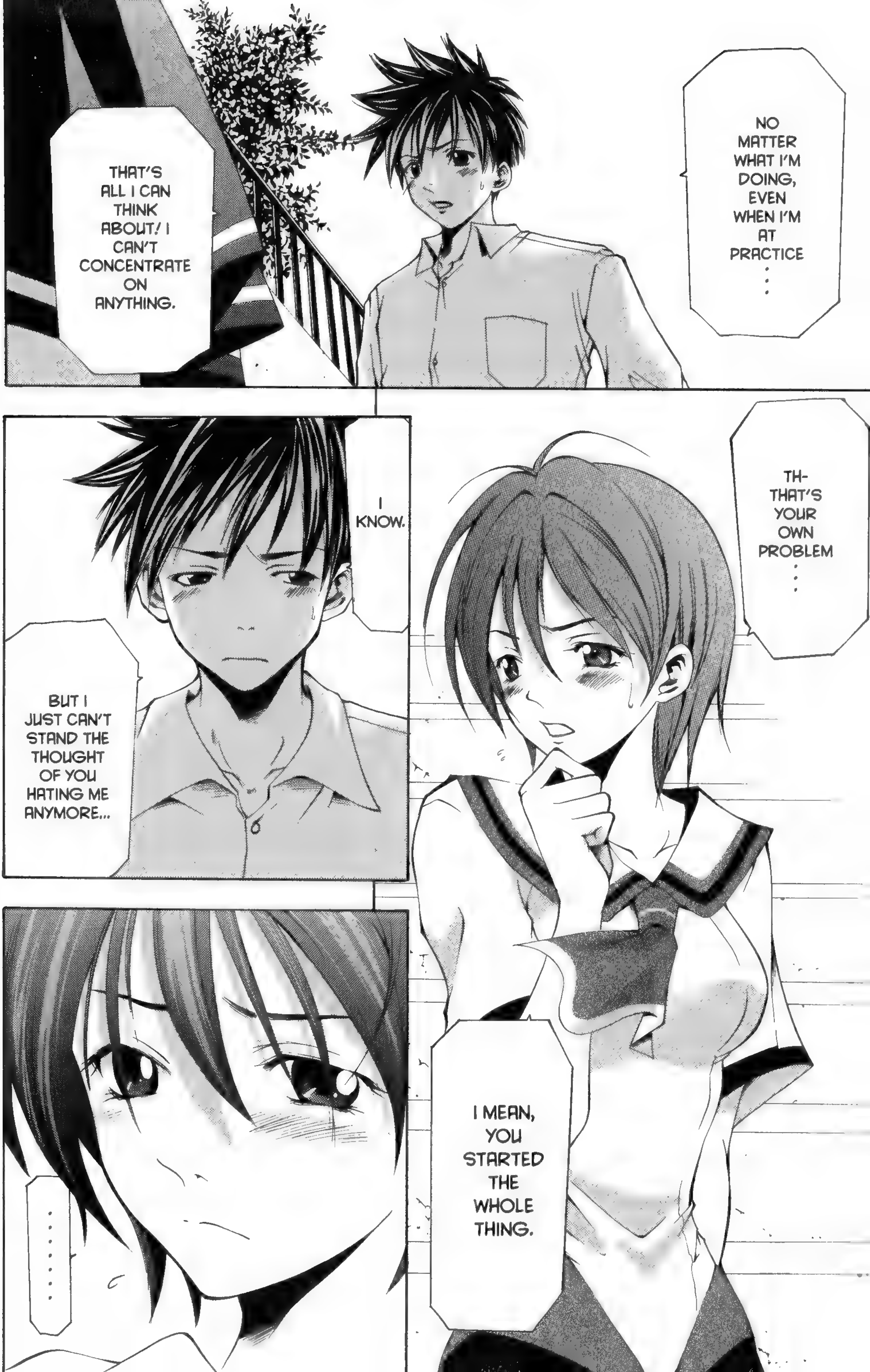

WAIT, HOLD ON!
……
Y-YOU KNOW THE REASON I GAVE YOU FOR BREAKING UP WITH HONOKA-CHAN...
WELL... THAT WAS... A LIE.
...WHAT?
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS NOW?
JUST LISTEN, OKAY.

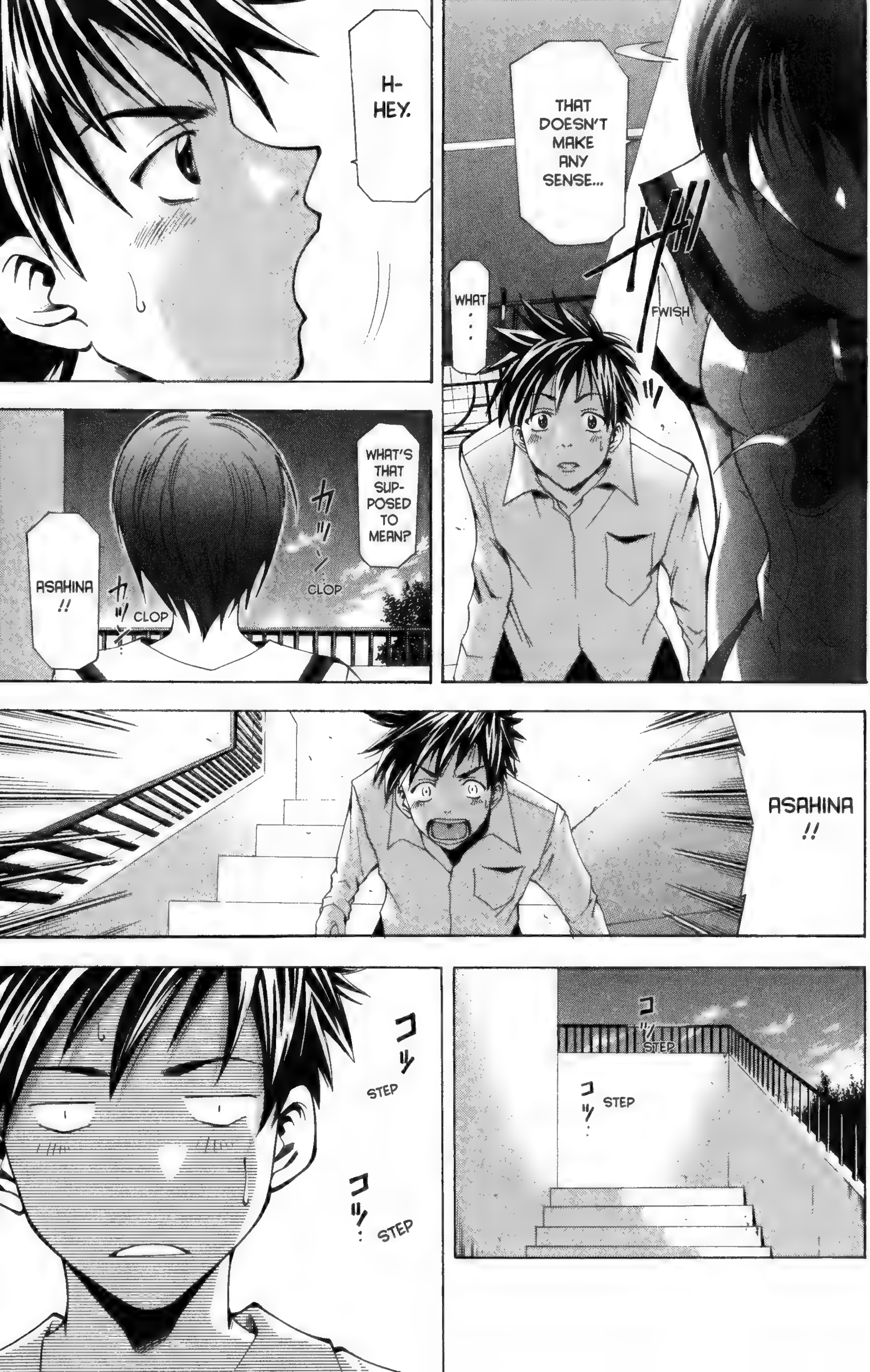

THE TRUTH IS WE WERE HAVING A LOT OF PROBLEMS AND WE GOT IN A BIG FIGHT...
WE JUST REALIZED THAT WE DIDN'T REALLY GET ALONG... SO THAT'S WHY WE...
EVEN IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS TRUE...
I...
I MEAN, IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE SOMETHING YOU'D NEED TO HIDE FROM ME.
ASAHI-YU BATHS
WELL...
THEN WHY DID YOU HAVE TO LIE TO ME LIKE THAT?

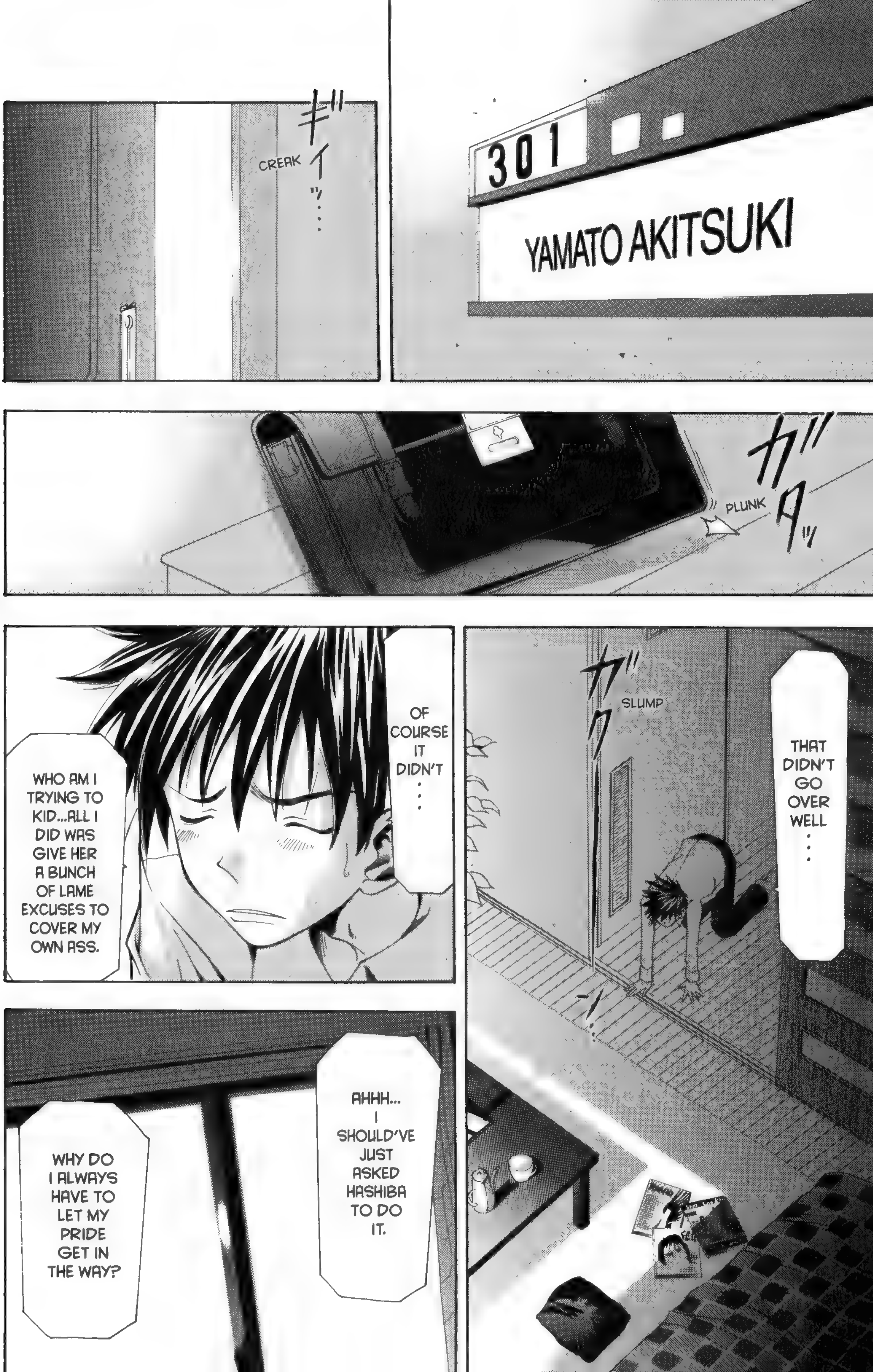

HONOKA SAID SHE THOUGHT I STILL LIKED YOU...
AND THAT'S HOW THE FIGHT STARTED.
WHAT...?
B-BUT THAT WASN'T THE REAL PROBLEM...
THAT WAS JUST WHAT TRIGGERED THE FIGHT...
THE REAL REASON WE BROKE UP WAS THAT I WASN'T TAKING THE RELATIONSHIP SERIOUSLY ENOUGH.

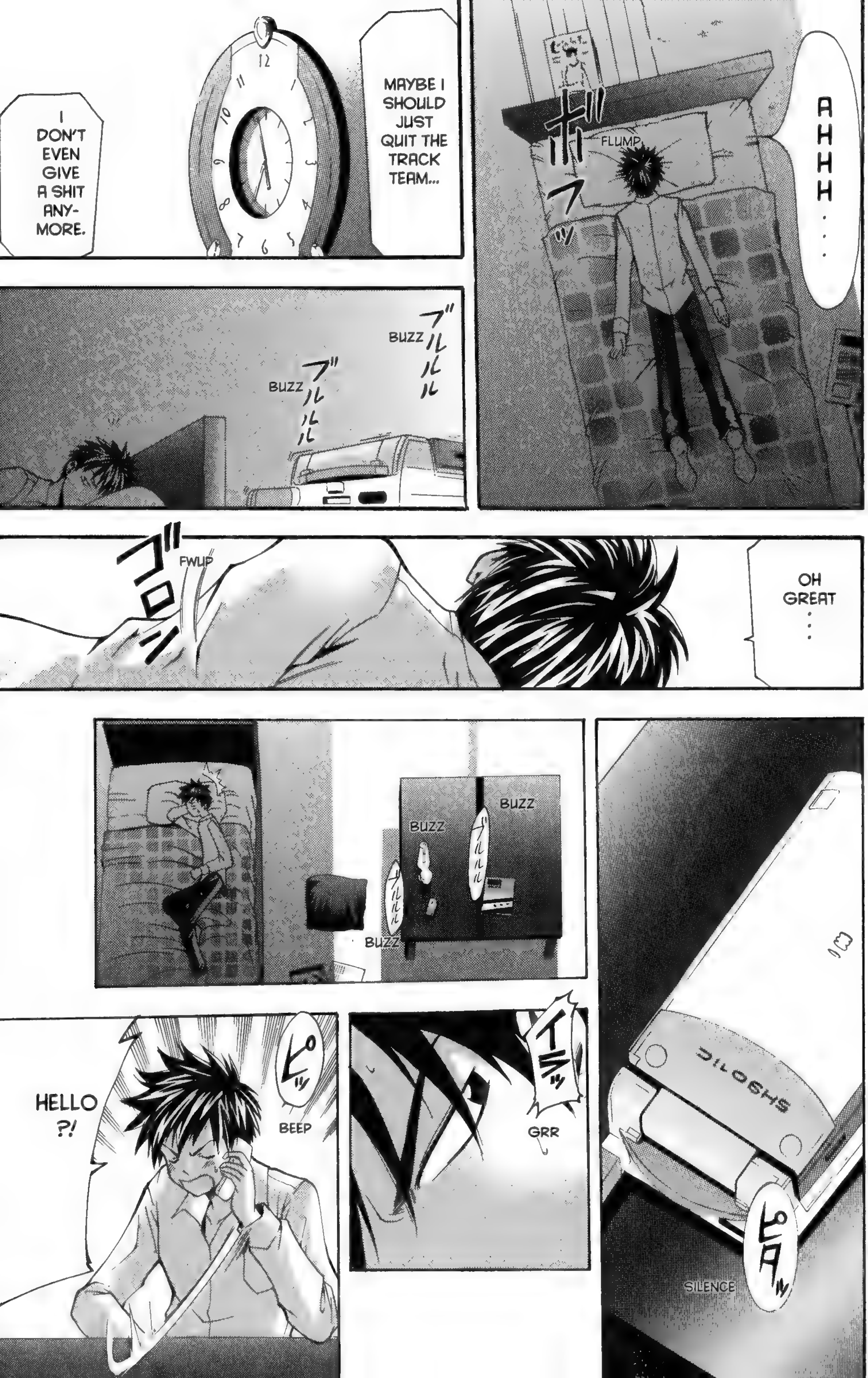

THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST TELL ME THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE?
BECAUSE IF I SAID THAT, I KNEW YOU'D TAKE IT PERSONALLY!!
OF COURSE I WOULD.
YOU TELL ME THAT I'M THE ONE WHO CAUSED YOUR BREAKUP.. HOW THE HELL DO YOU EXPECT ME TO FEEL?
THERE YOU GO!! SEE!
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T TELL YOU THE TRUTH!!
TH-THEN WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS NOW!?
WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT?

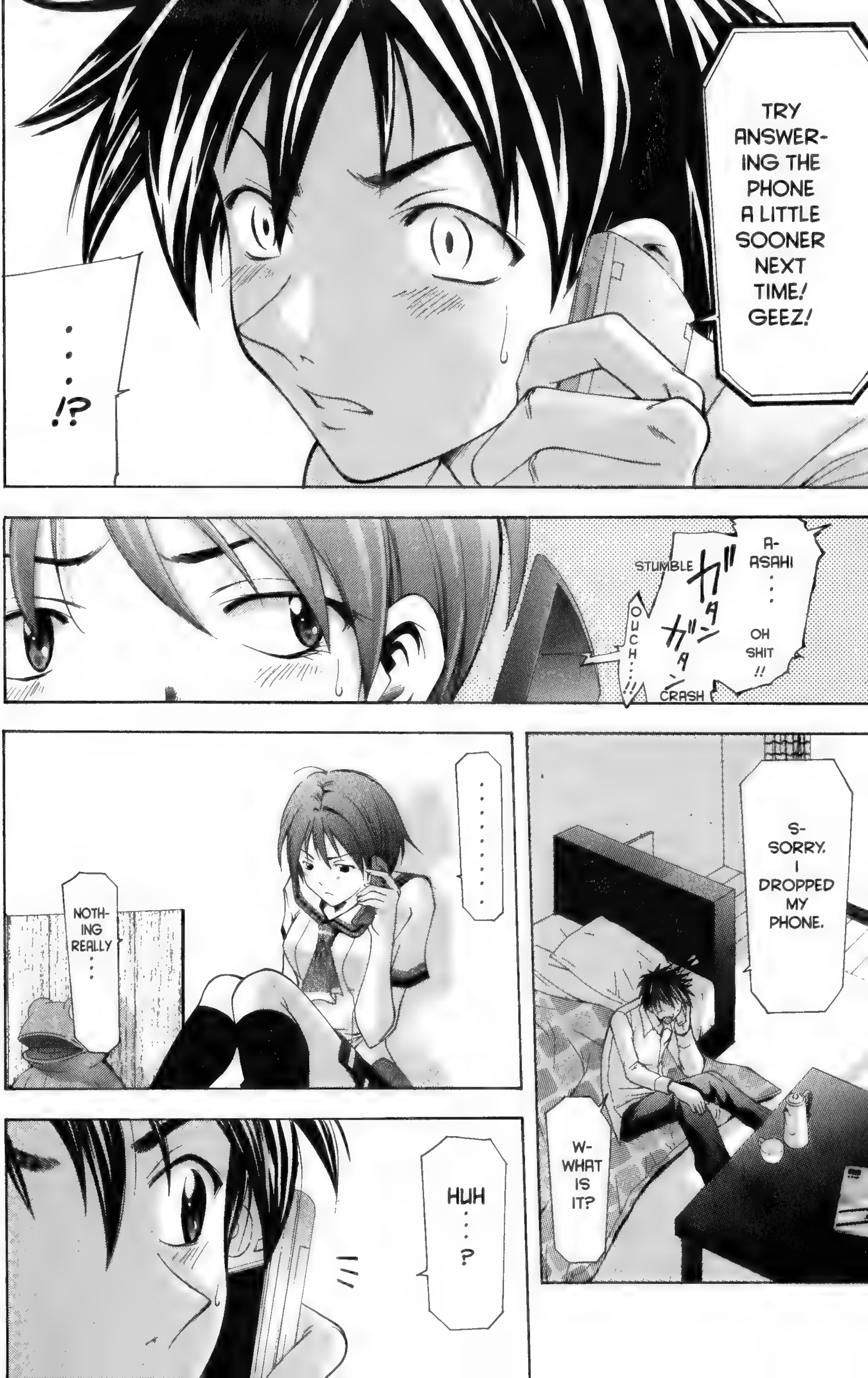

B-...
BLUSH
...BECAUSE...
I HATE THIS!!
I HATE FIGHTING WITH YOU!!
....
...HUH?

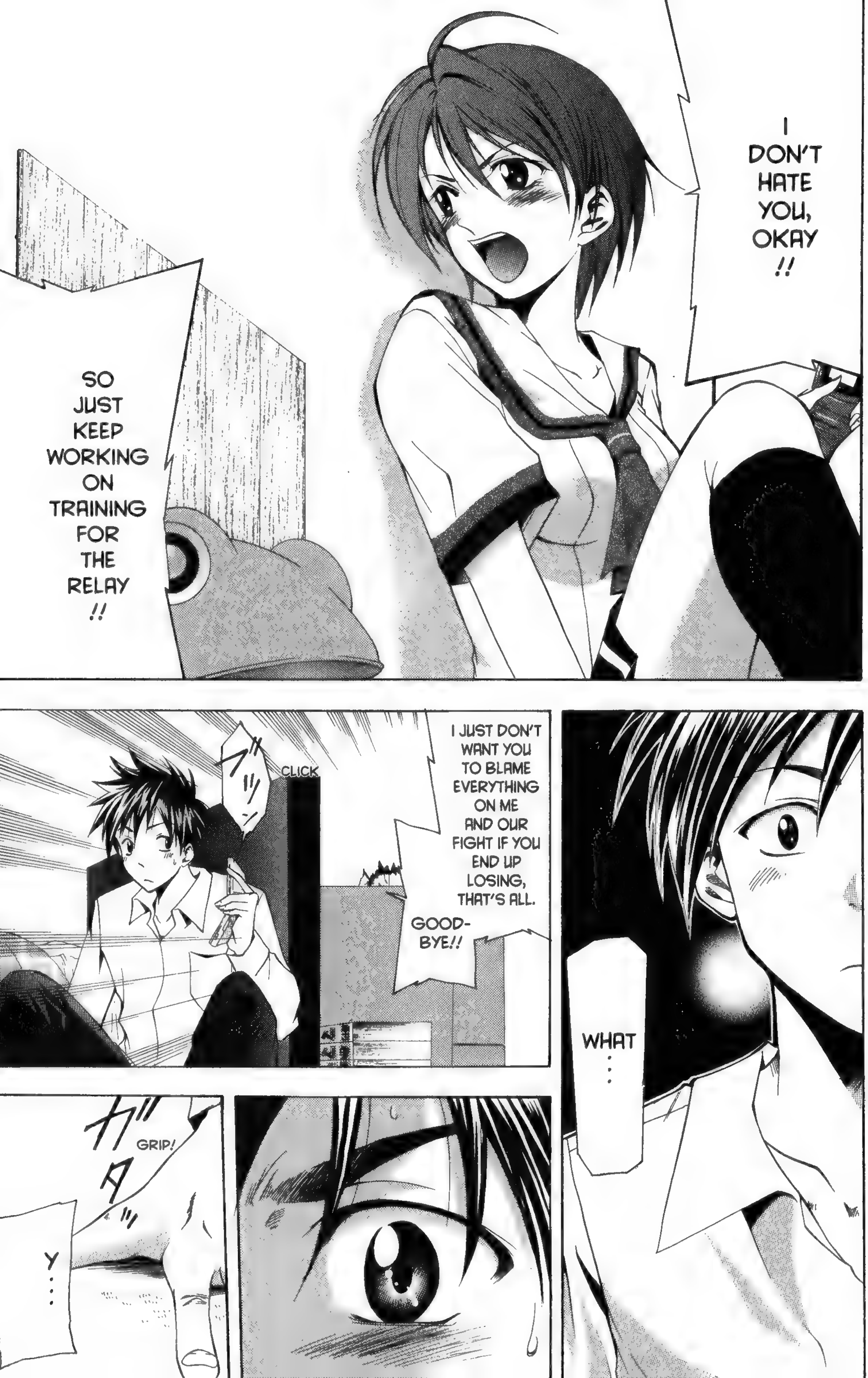

NO MATTER WHAT I'M DOING, EVEN WHEN I'M AT PRACTICE...
THAT'S ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT! I CAN'T CONCENTRATE ON ANYTHING.
TH-THAT'S YOUR OWN PROBLEM...
I KNOW.
BUT I JUST CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF YOU HATING ME ANYMORE...
I MEAN, YOU STARTED THE WHOLE THING.
......

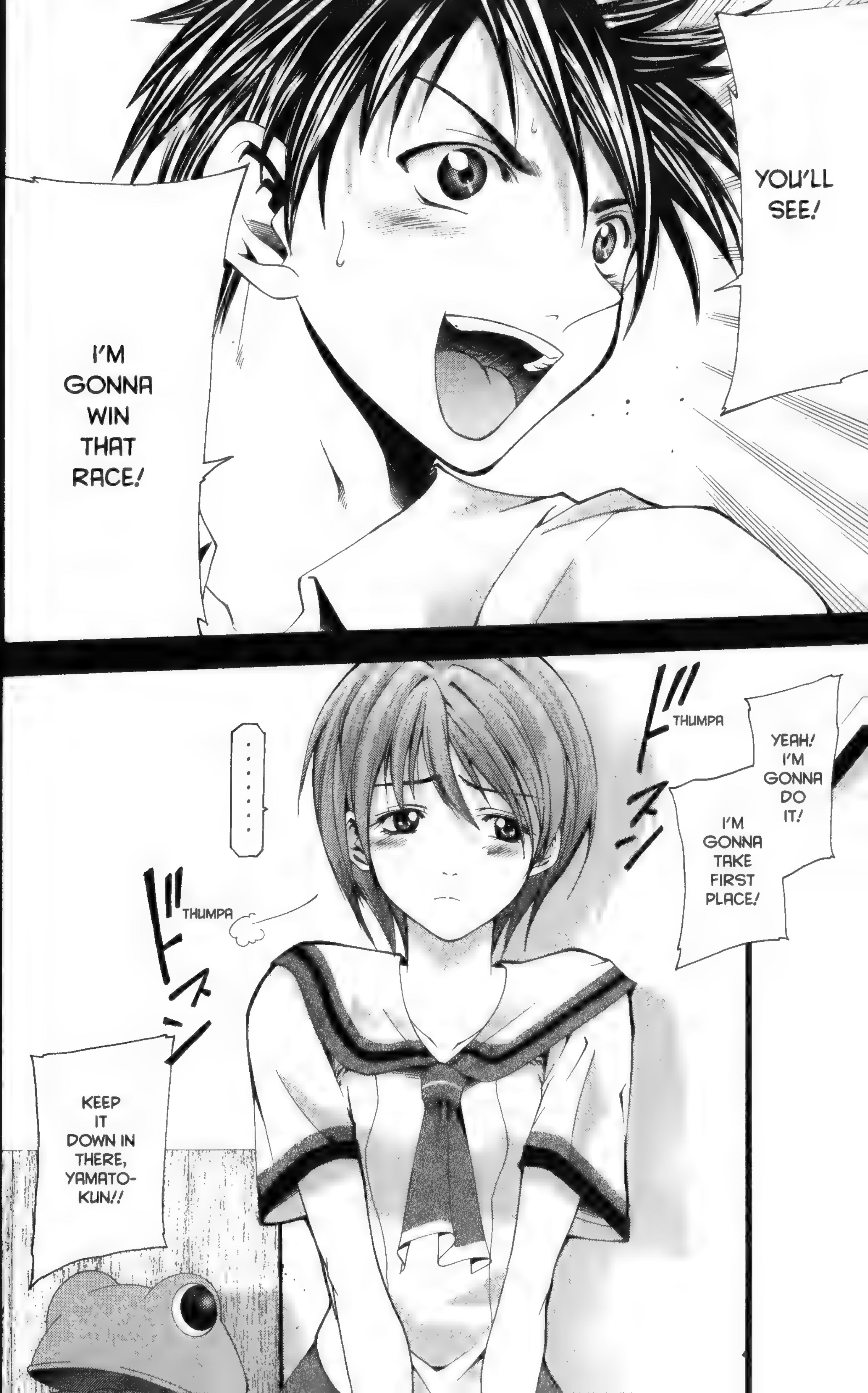

THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE...
WHAT...
FWISH
H-HEY.
WHAT'S THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN?
カッ CLOP
カッ CLOP
ASAHINA!!
ASAHINA!!
コッ STEP
コッ STEP
コッ STEP
コッ STEP

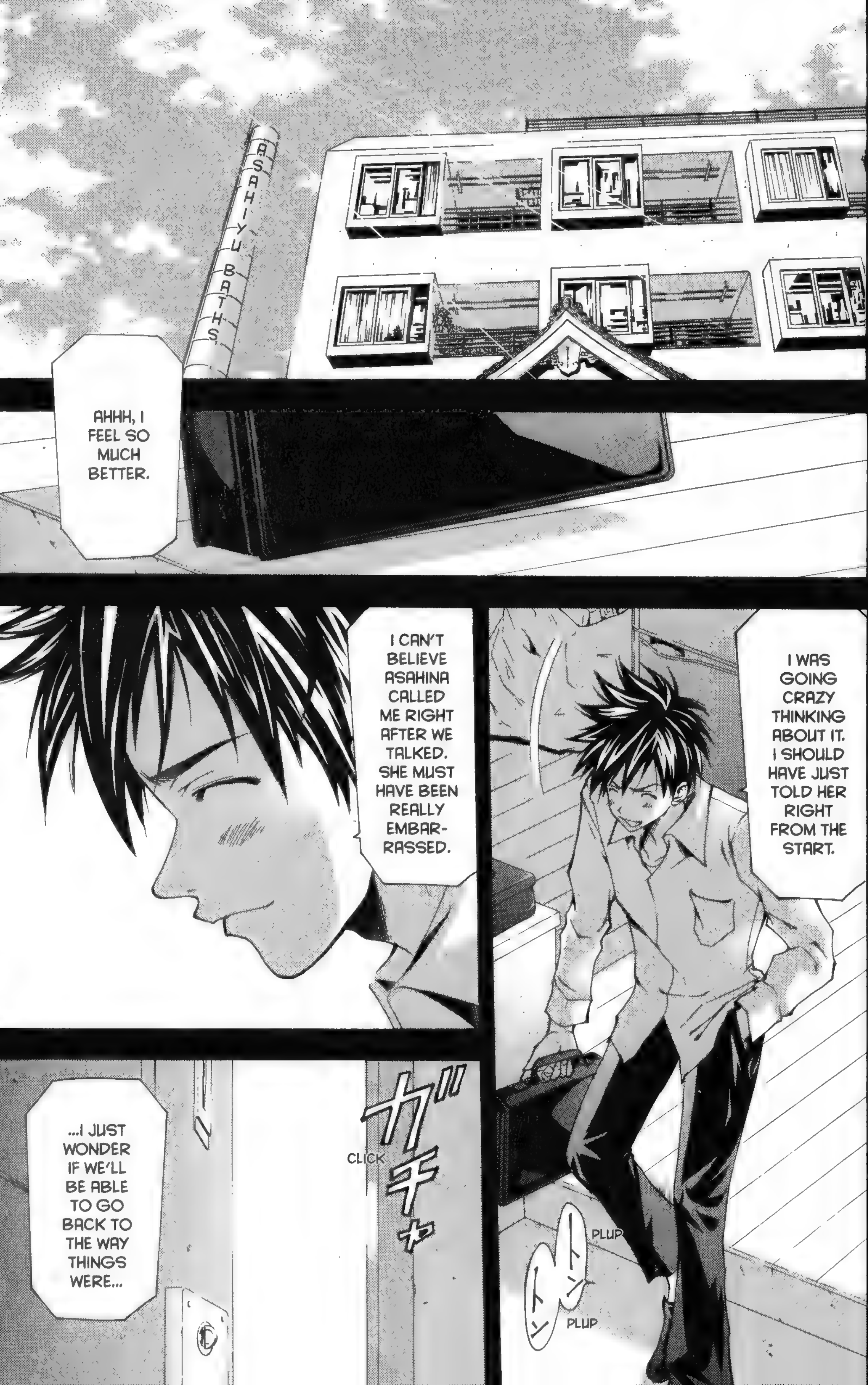

301
YAMATO AKITSUKI
ギイッ…
CREAK
ガタッ
PLUNK
ガク
SLUMP
THAT DIDN'T GO OVER WELL...
OF COURSE IT DIDN'T...
WHO AM I TRYING TO KID...ALL I DID WAS GIVE HER A BUNCH OF LAME EXCUSES TO COVER MY OWN ASS.
AHHH... I SHOULD'VE JUST ASKED HASHIBA TO DO IT.
WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO LET MY PRIDE GET IN THE WAY?


AHHH...
ボフッ
FLUMP
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST QUIT THE TRACK TEAM...
I DON'T EVEN GIVE A SHIT ANYMORE.
ブルルル
BUZZ
ブルルル
BUZZ
OH GREAT...
ゴロッ
FWUP
ブルルル
BUZZ
BUZZ
ブルルル
BUZZ
ピタッ
SILENCE
イラッ
GRR
ピッ
BEEP
HELLO?!


TRY ANSWERING THE PHONE A LITTLE SOONER NEXT TIME! GEEZ!
...!?
A-ASAHI...
OH SHIT!!
STUMBLE
ガタン
ガタン
CRASH
OUCH...!!
S-SORRY. I DROPPED MY PHONE.
W-WHAT IS IT?
....
NOTHING REALLY...
HUH...?

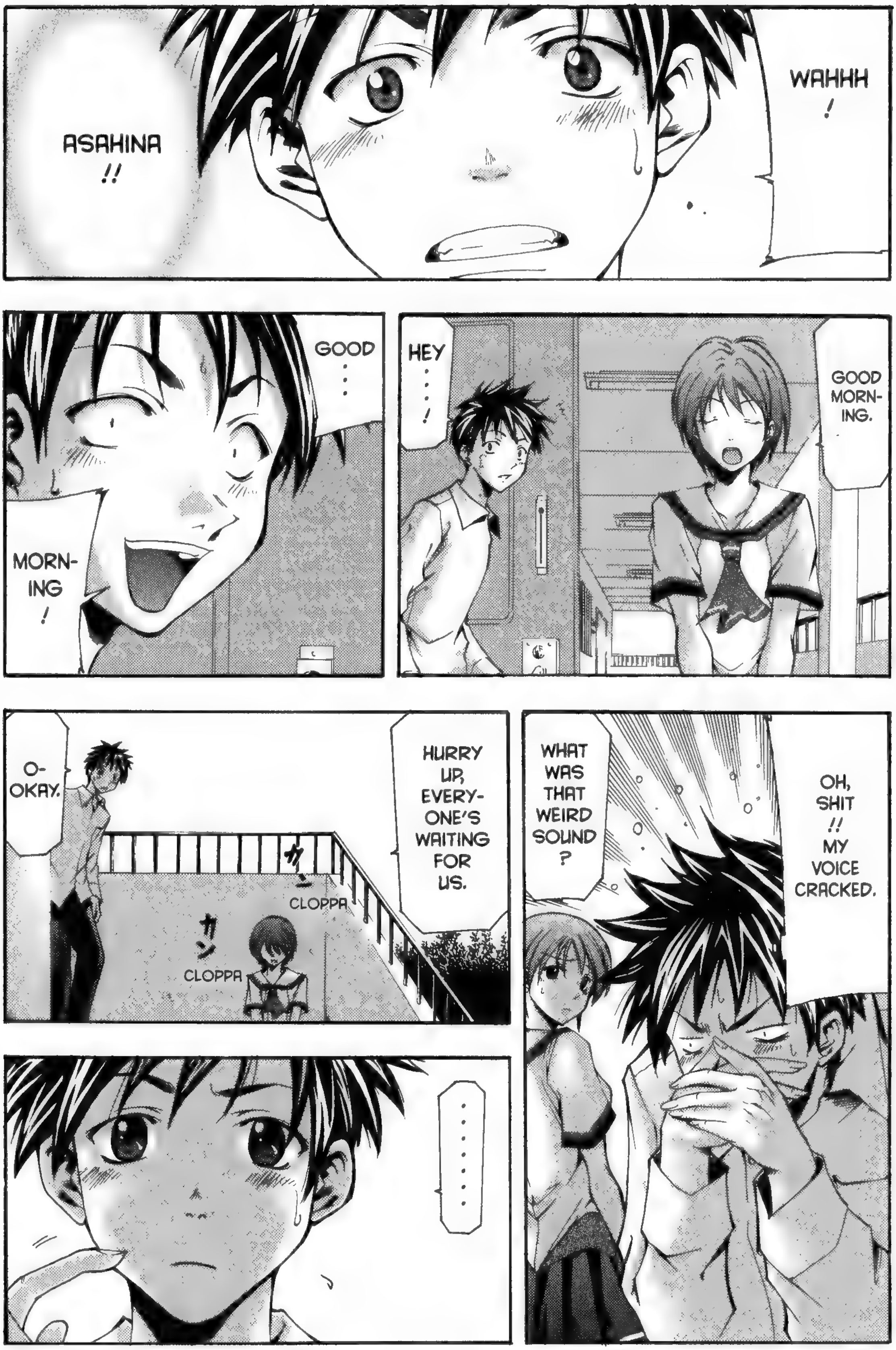

I DON'T HATE YOU, OKAY!!
SO JUST KEEP WORKING ON TRAINING FOR THE RELAY!!
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO BLAME EVERYTHING ON ME AND OUR FIGHT IF YOU END UP LOSING, THAT'S ALL.
GOOD-BYE!!
CLICK
WHAT...
GRIP!
Y...

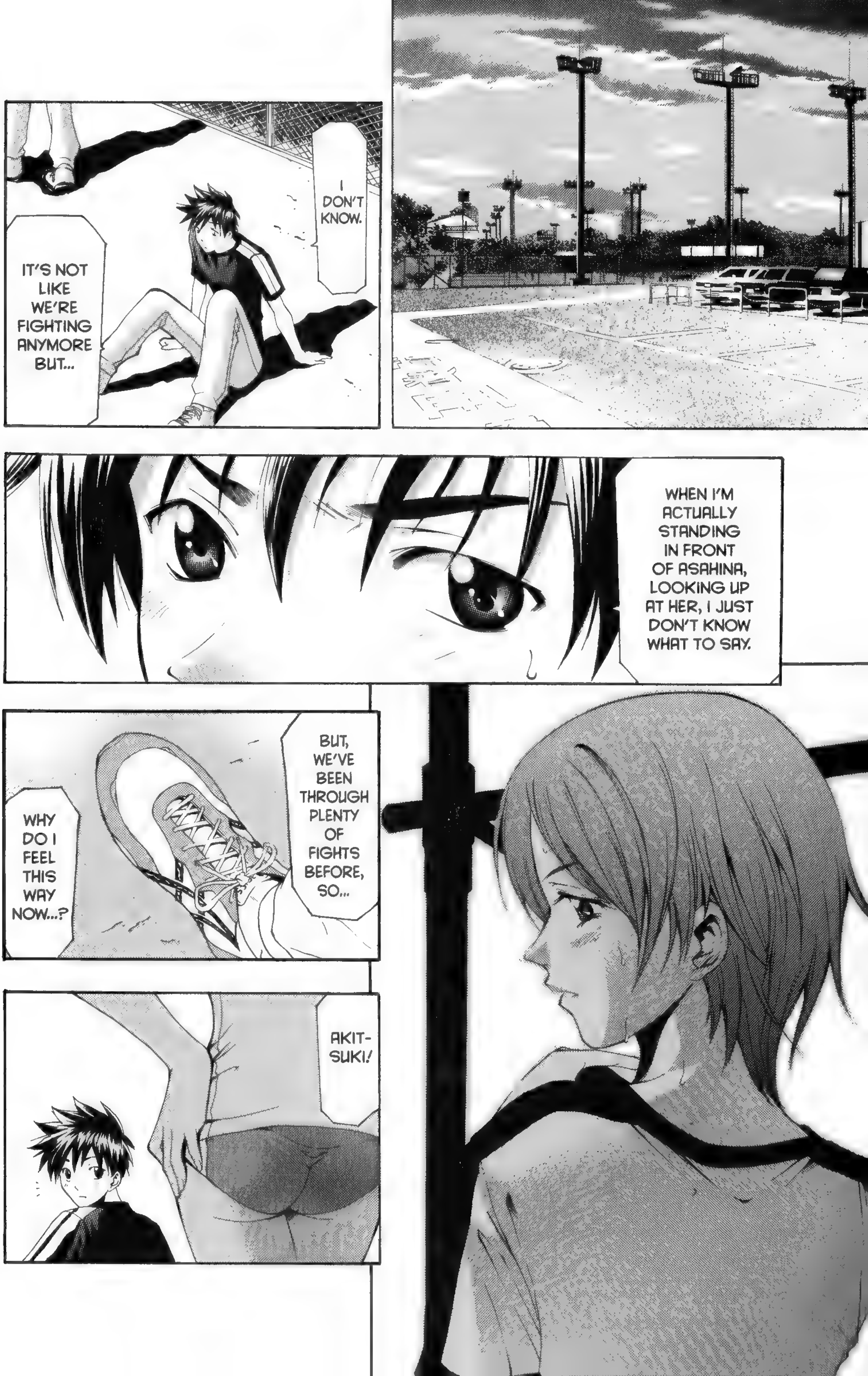

YOU'LL SEE!
I'M GONNA WIN THAT RACE!
THUMPA
YEAH! I'M GONNA DO IT!
I'M GONNA TAKE FIRST PLACE!
....
THUMPA
KEEP IT DOWN IN THERE, YAMATO-KUN!!

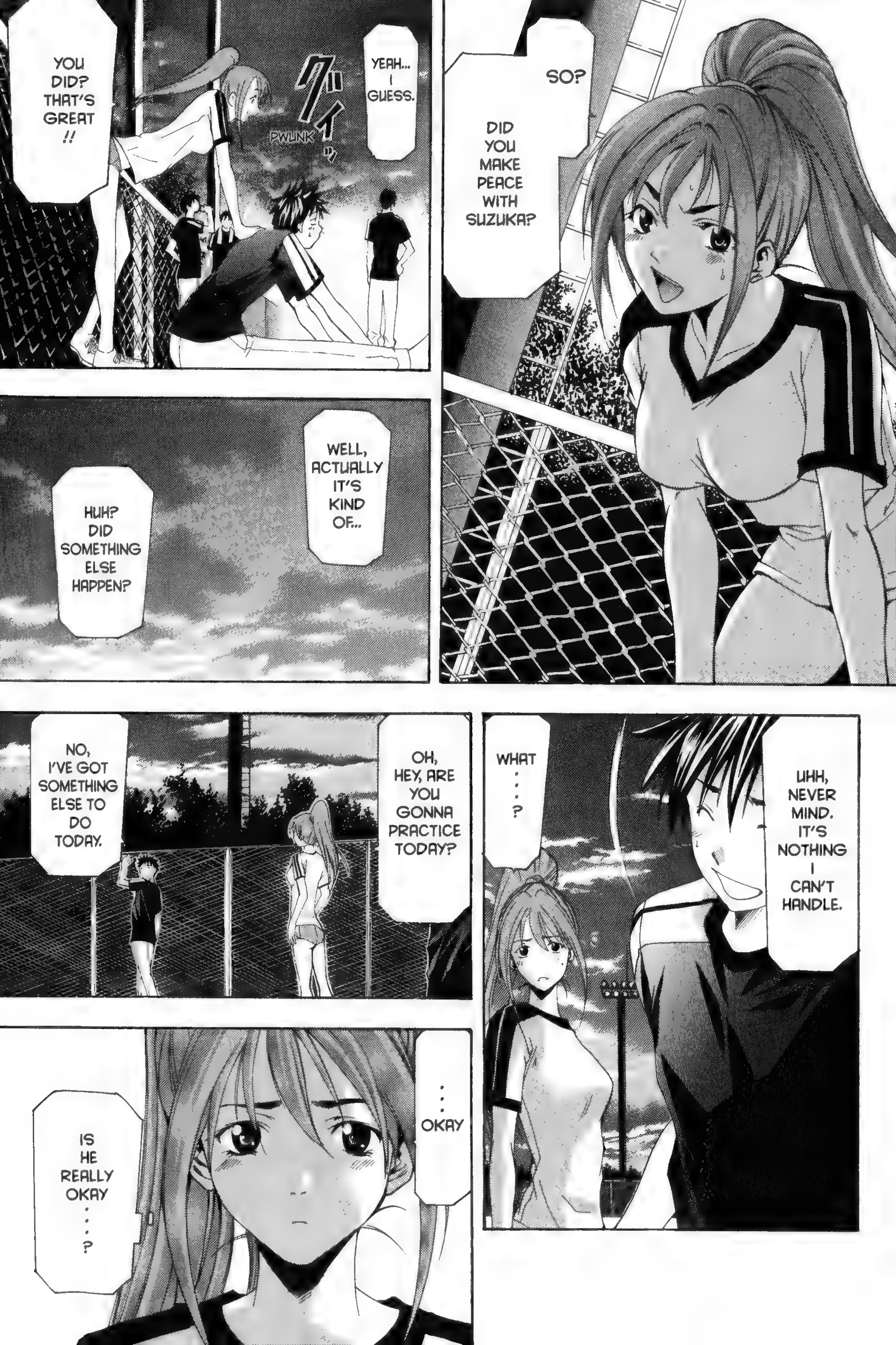

ASAHIYU BATHS
AHHH, I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER.
I WAS GOING CRAZY THINKING ABOUT IT. I SHOULD HAVE JUST TOLD HER RIGHT FROM THE START.
I CAN'T BELIEVE ASAHINA CALLED ME RIGHT AFTER WE TALKED. SHE MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY EMBARRASSED.
トン
PLUP
トン
PLUP
ガチャ
CLICK
...I JUST WONDER IF WE'LL BE ABLE TO GO BACK TO THE WAY THINGS WERE...

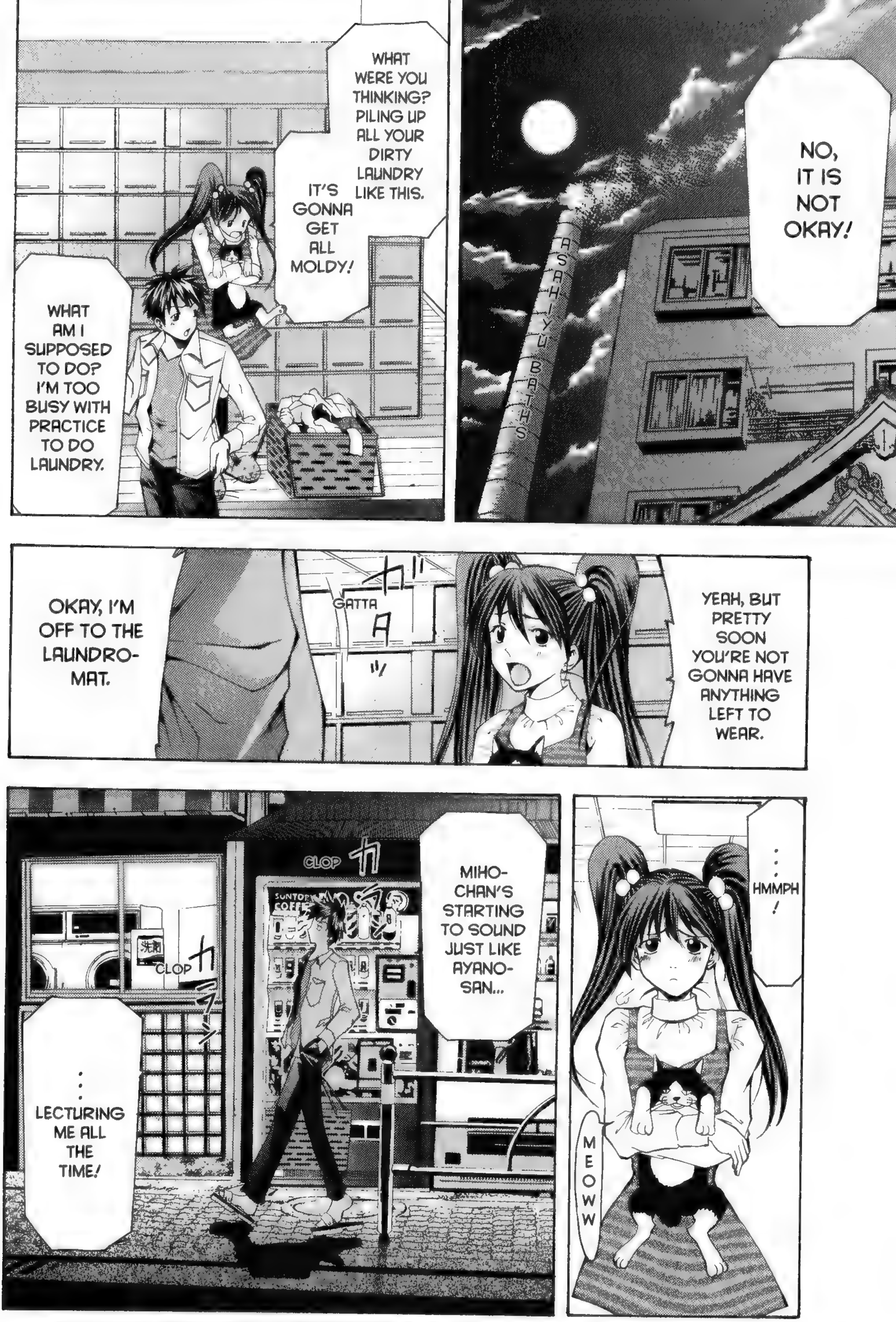
SUZUKA

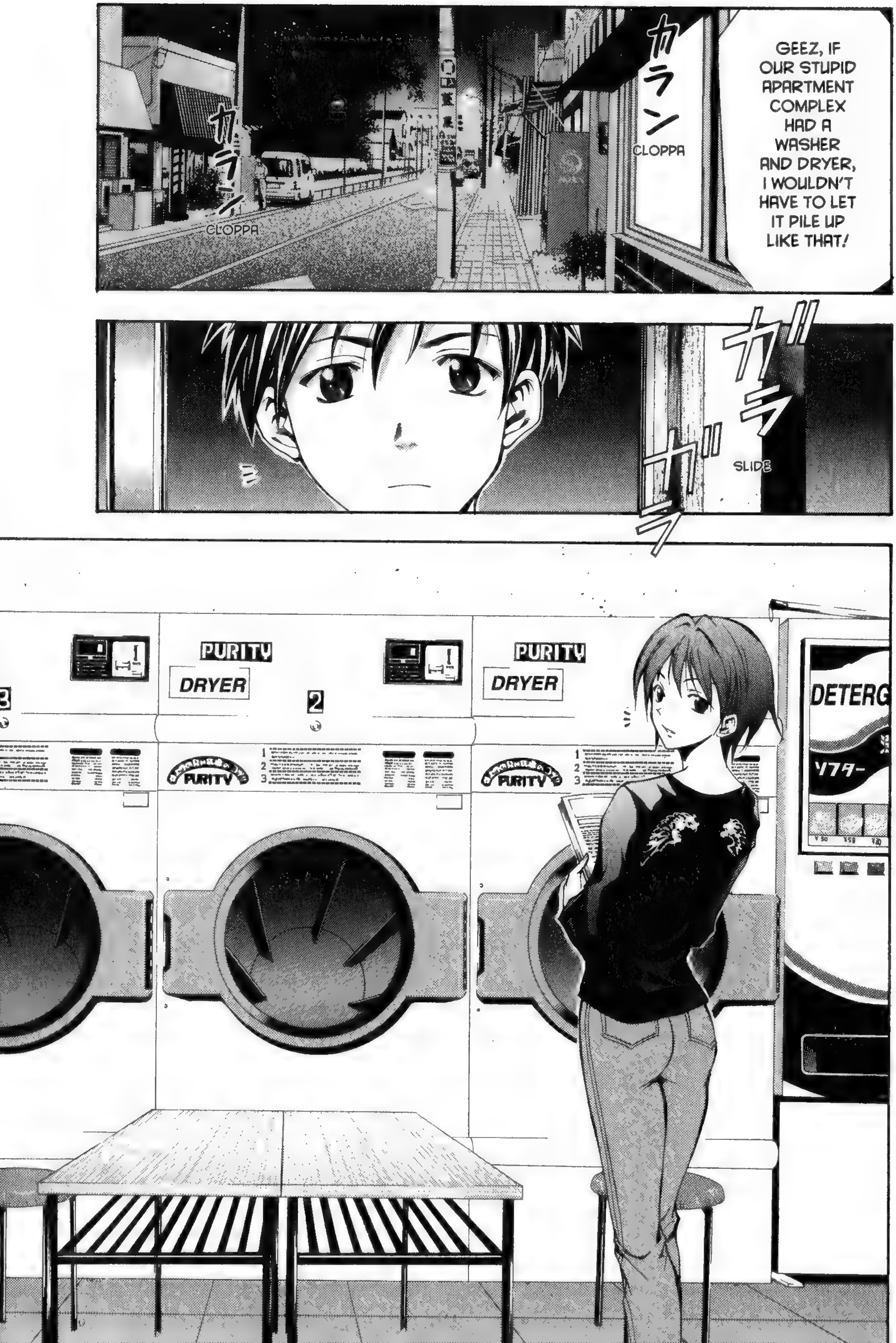
#58 LAUNDRY

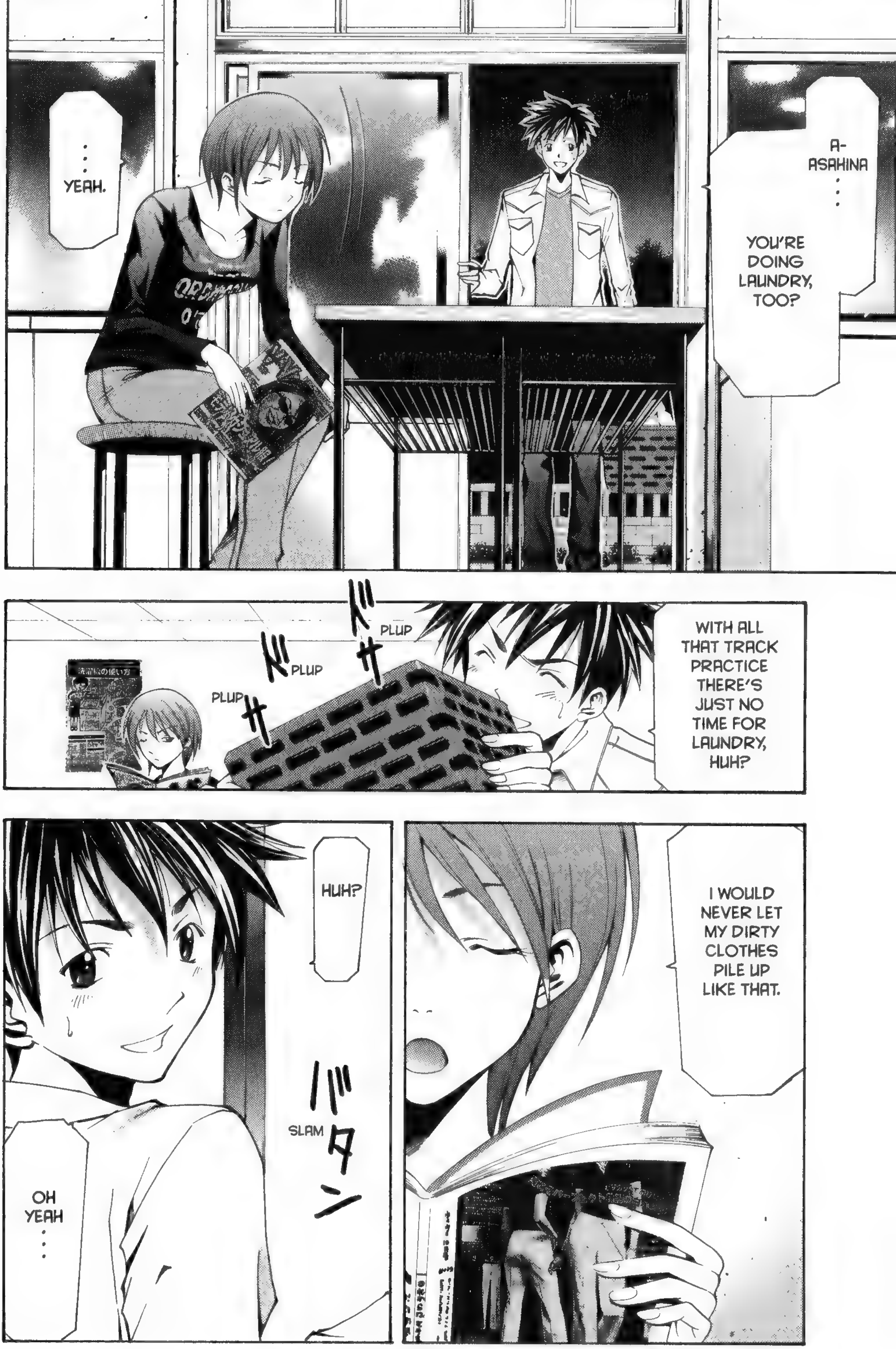

ASAHINA!!
WAHHH!
GOOD...
MORNING!
HEY....!
GOOD MORNING.
O-OKAY.
HURRY UP, EVERYONE'S WAITING FOR US.
カン CLOPPA
カン CLOPPA
....
WHAT WAS THAT WEIRD SOUND?
OH, SHIT!! MY VOICE CRACKED.

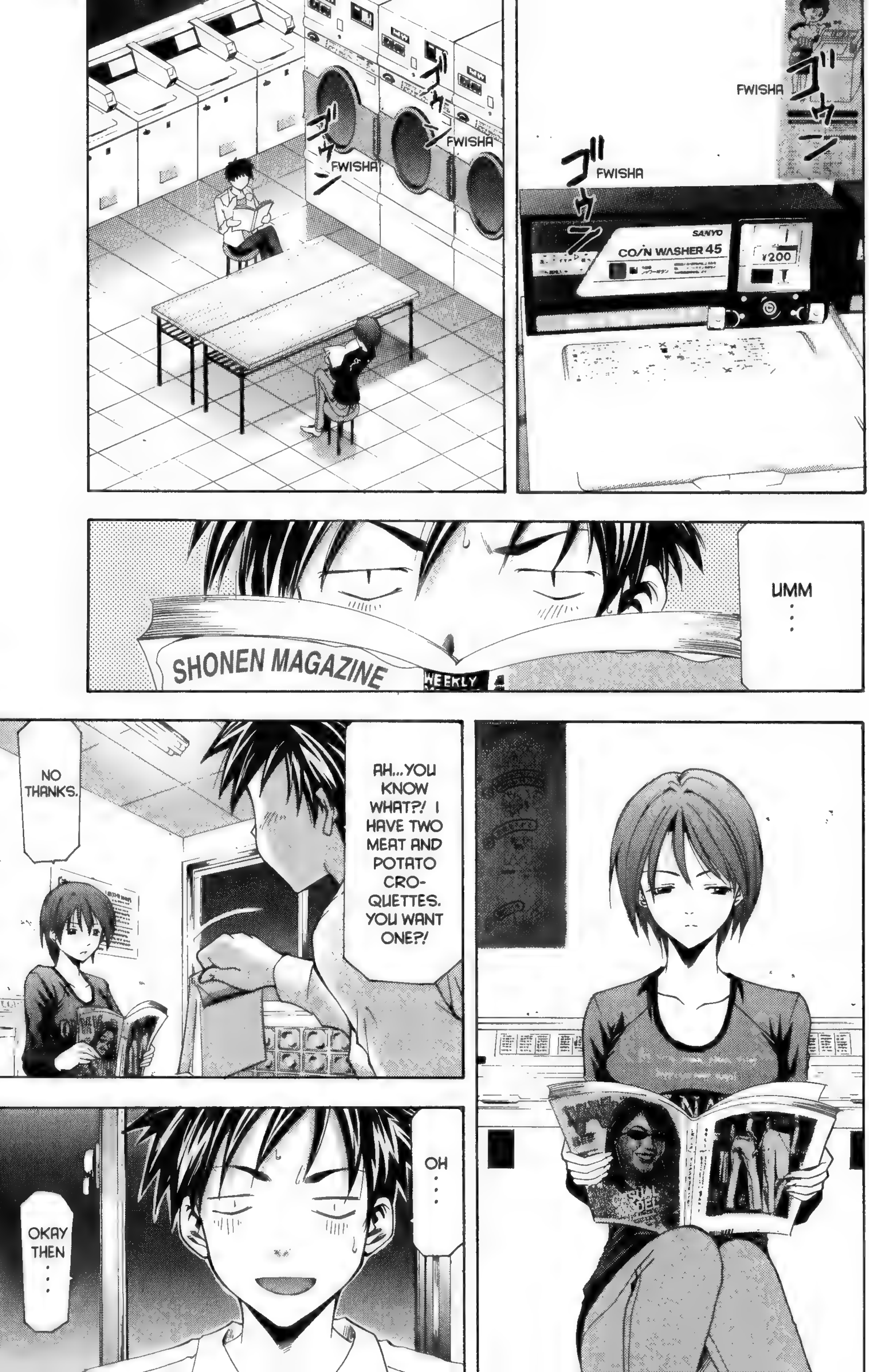

I DON'T KNOW.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE FIGHTING ANYMORE BUT...
WHEN I'M ACTUALLY STANDING IN FRONT OF ASAHINA, LOOKING UP AT HER, I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
BUT, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH PLENTY OF FIGHTS BEFORE, SO...
WHY DO I FEEL THIS WAY NOW...?
AKITSUKI!

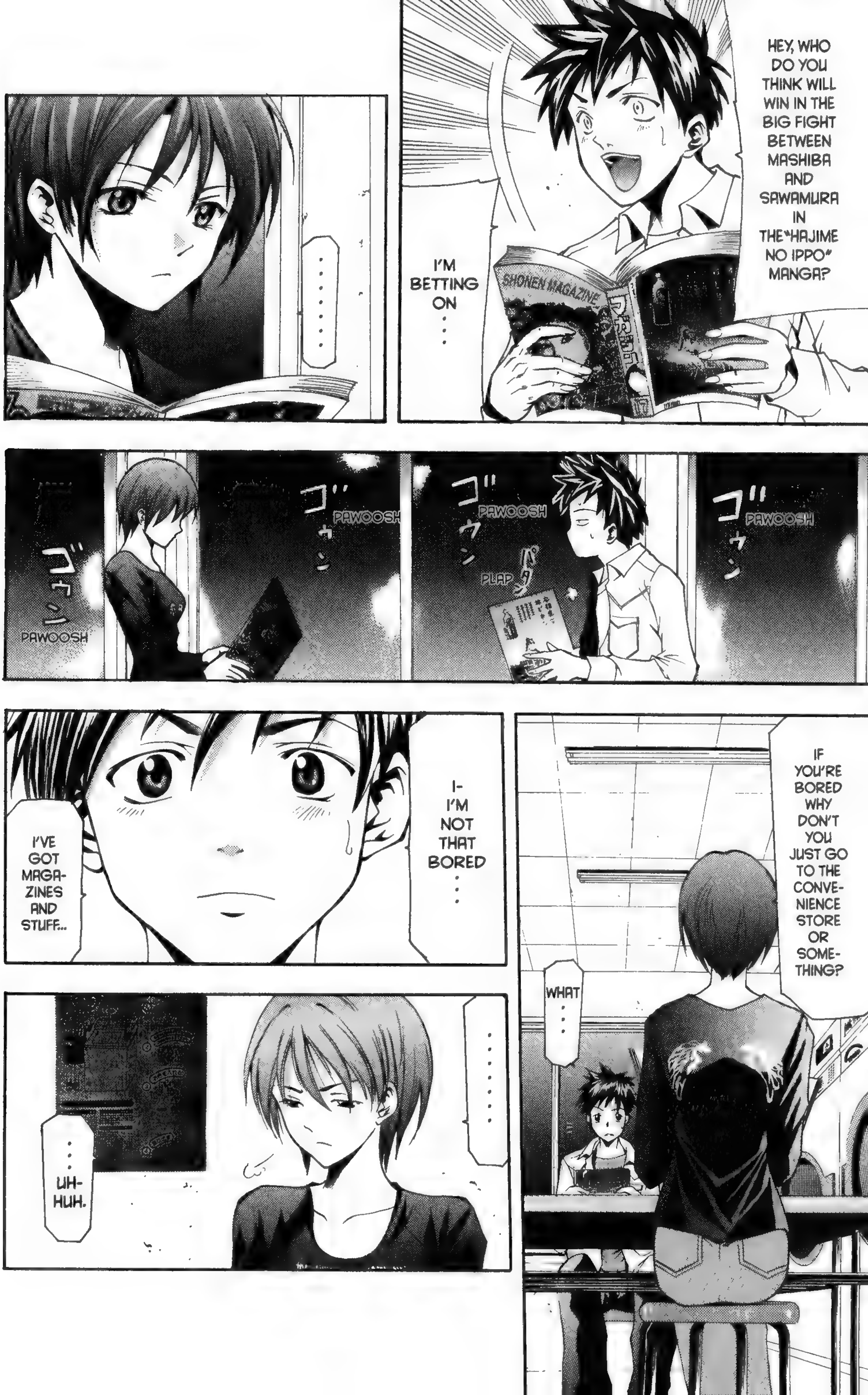

SO?
DID YOU MAKE PEACE WITH SUZUKA?
YEAH... I GUESS.
グイッ
PWUNK
YOU DID? THAT'S GREAT!!
WELL, ACTUALLY IT'S KIND OF...
HUH? DID SOMETHING ELSE HAPPEN?
UHH, NEVER MIND. IT'S NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE.
WHAT...?
OH, HEY, ARE YOU GONNA PRACTICE TODAY?
NO, I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO DO TODAY.
...OKAY
IS HE REALLY OKAY...?

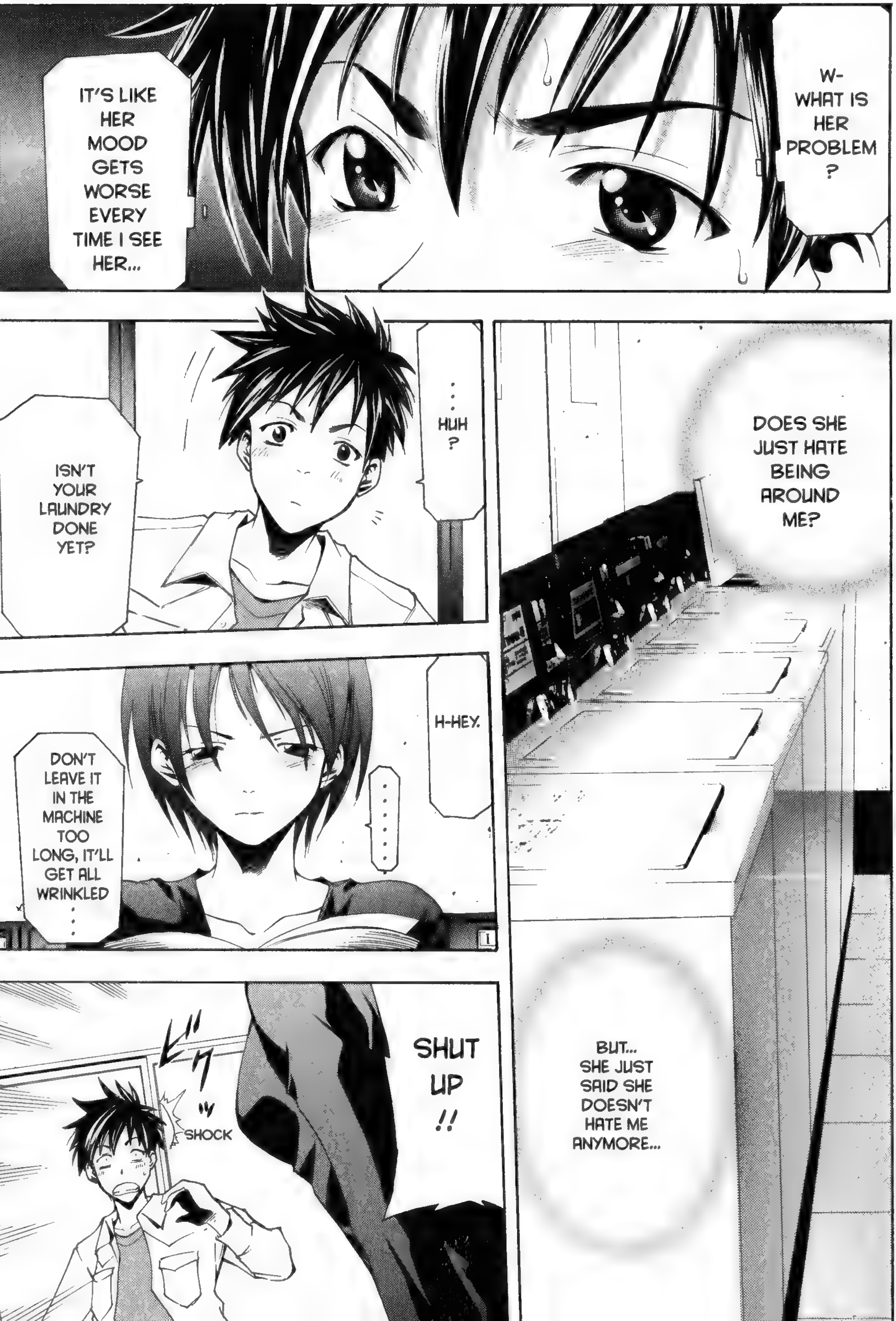

NO, IT IS NOT OKAY!
ASAHIYU BATHS
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? PILING UP ALL YOUR DIRTY LAUNDRY LIKE THIS.
IT'S GONNA GET ALL MOLDY!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? I'M TOO BUSY WITH PRACTICE TO DO LAUNDRY.
YEAH, BUT PRETTY SOON YOU'RE NOT GONNA HAVE ANYTHING LEFT TO WEAR.
GATTA
OKAY, I'M OFF TO THE LAUNDROMAT.
...HMMPH!
MEOWW
MIHO-CHAN'S STARTING TO SOUND JUST LIKE AYANO-SAN...
CLOP
CLOP
...LECTURING ME ALL THE TIME!

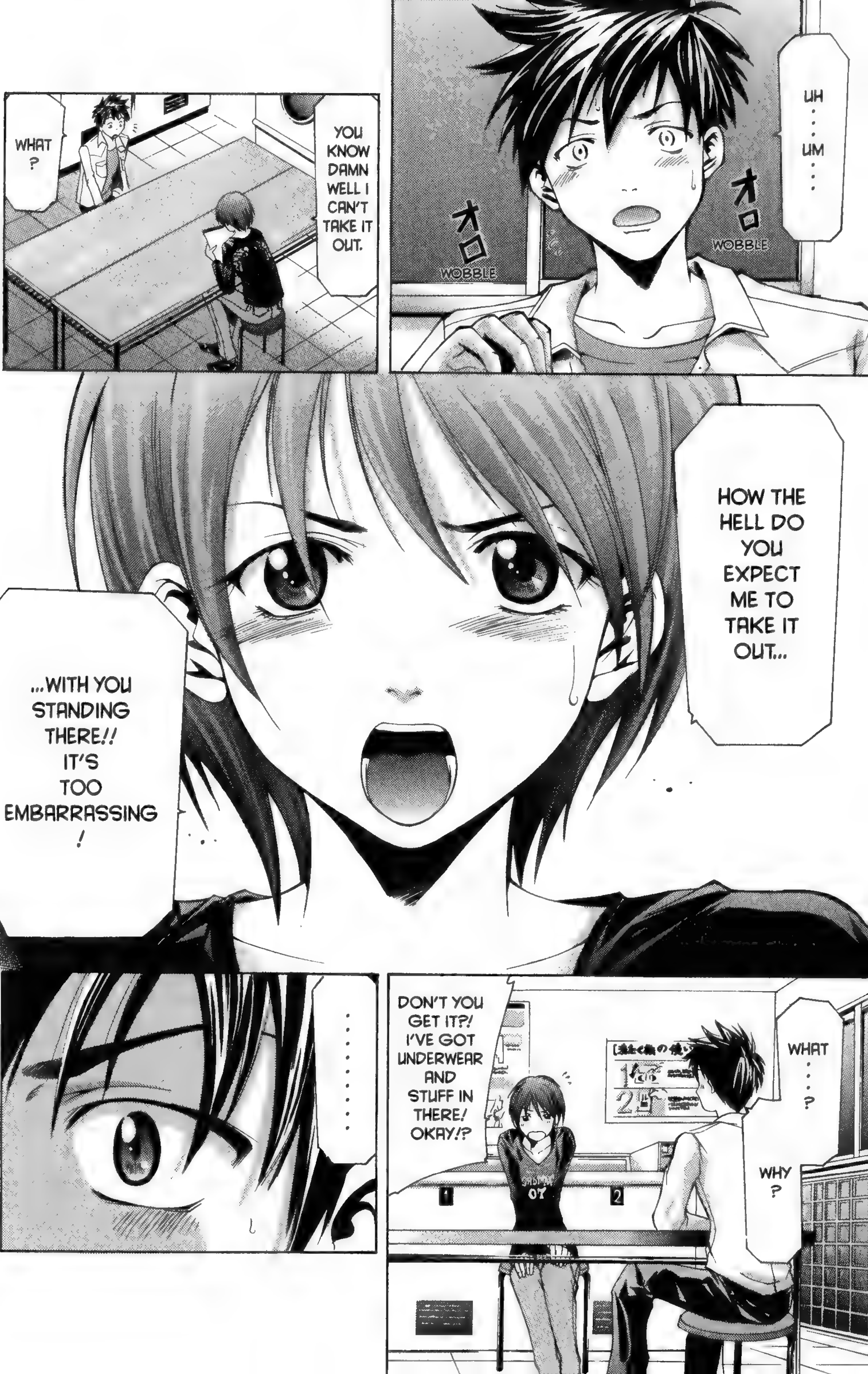

GEEZ, IF OUR STUPID APARTMENT COMPLEX HAD A WASHER AND DRYER, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO LET IT PILE UP LIKE THAT!
カラン
CLOPPA
カラン
CLOPPA
ガラ
ガラ
SLIDE
DETERG
ソフター
PURITY
DRYER
2
PURITY
DRYER
3

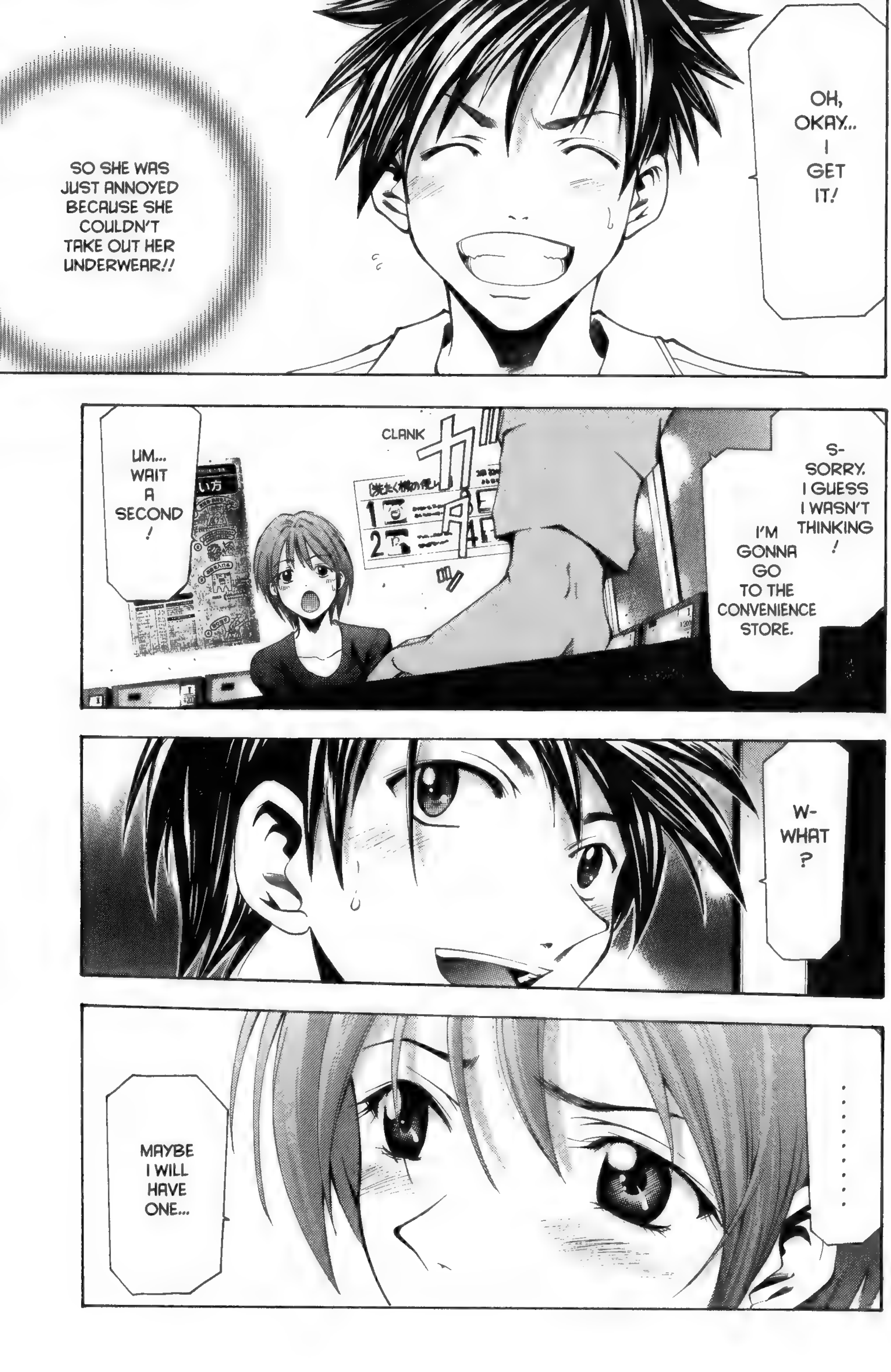

A-ASAHINA...
YOU'RE DOING LAUNDRY, TOO?
...YEAH.
ドサ PLUP
ドサ PLUP
PLUP
WITH ALL THAT TRACK PRACTICE THERE'S JUST NO TIME FOR LAUNDRY, HUH?
洗濯機の使い方
I WOULD NEVER LET MY DIRTY CLOTHES PILE UP LIKE THAT.
バタン SLAM
HUH?
OH YEAH...

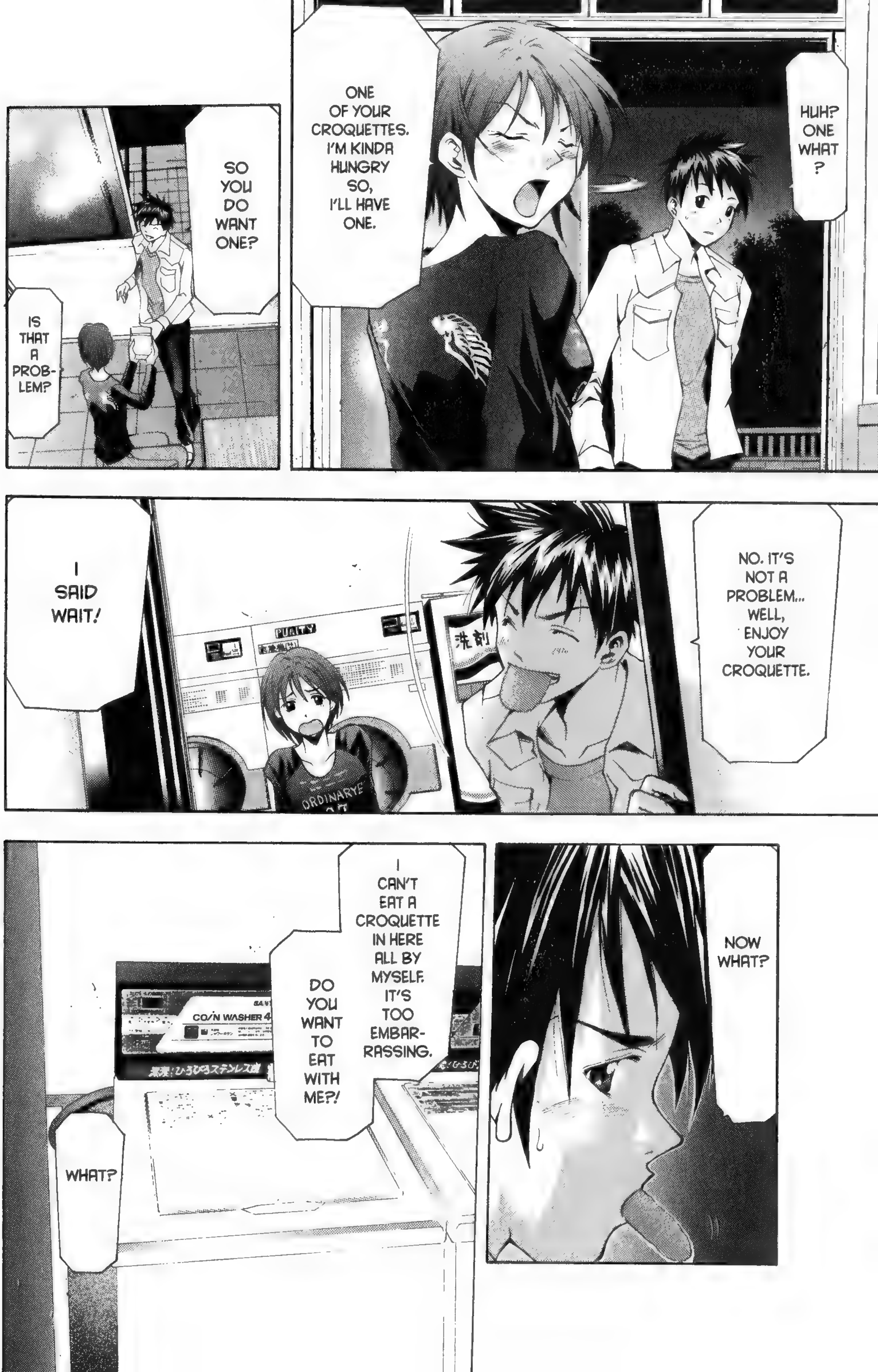

ゴウーン
FWISHA
ゴウン
FWISHA
SANYO
COIN WASHER 45
¥200
ゴウーン
FWISHA
ゴウン
FWISHA
UMM...
SHONEN MAGAZINE
WEEKLY
AH...YOU KNOW WHAT?! I HAVE TWO MEAT AND POTATO CROQUETTES. YOU WANT ONE?!
NO THANKS.
OH...
OKAY THEN...

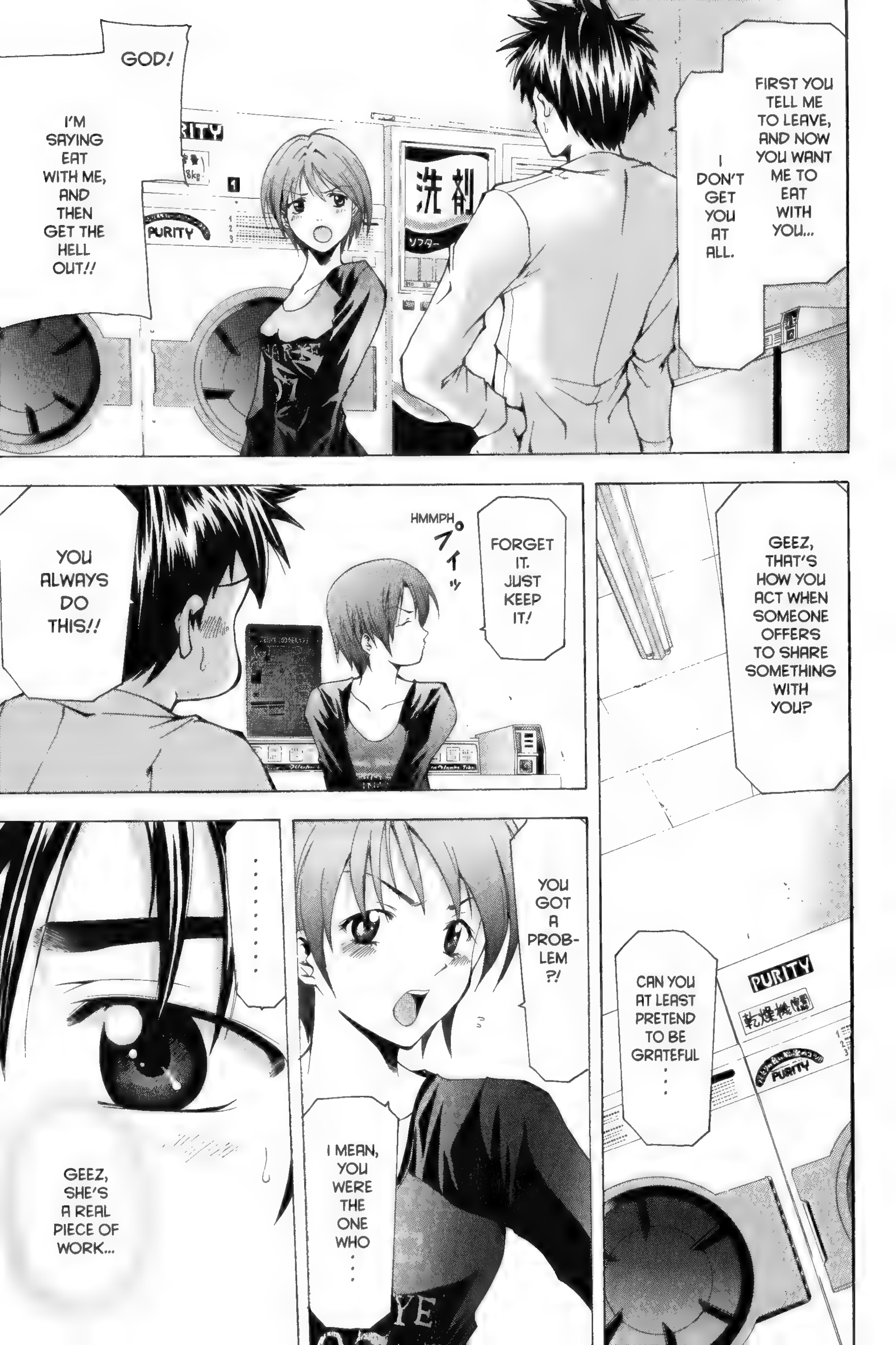

HEY, WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN IN THE BIG FIGHT BETWEEN MASHIBA AND SAWAMURA IN THE "HAJIME NO IPPO" MANGA?
SHONEN MAGAZINE
I'M BETTING ON...
....
ゴゥン
PAWOOSH
ゴゥン
PAWOOSH
パタン
PLAP
ゴゥン
PAWOOSH
ゴゥン
PAWOOSH
IF YOU'RE BORED WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE OR SOMETHING?
WHAT...
I-I'M NOT THAT BORED...
I'VE GOT MAGAZINES AND STUFF...
....
...UH-HUH.

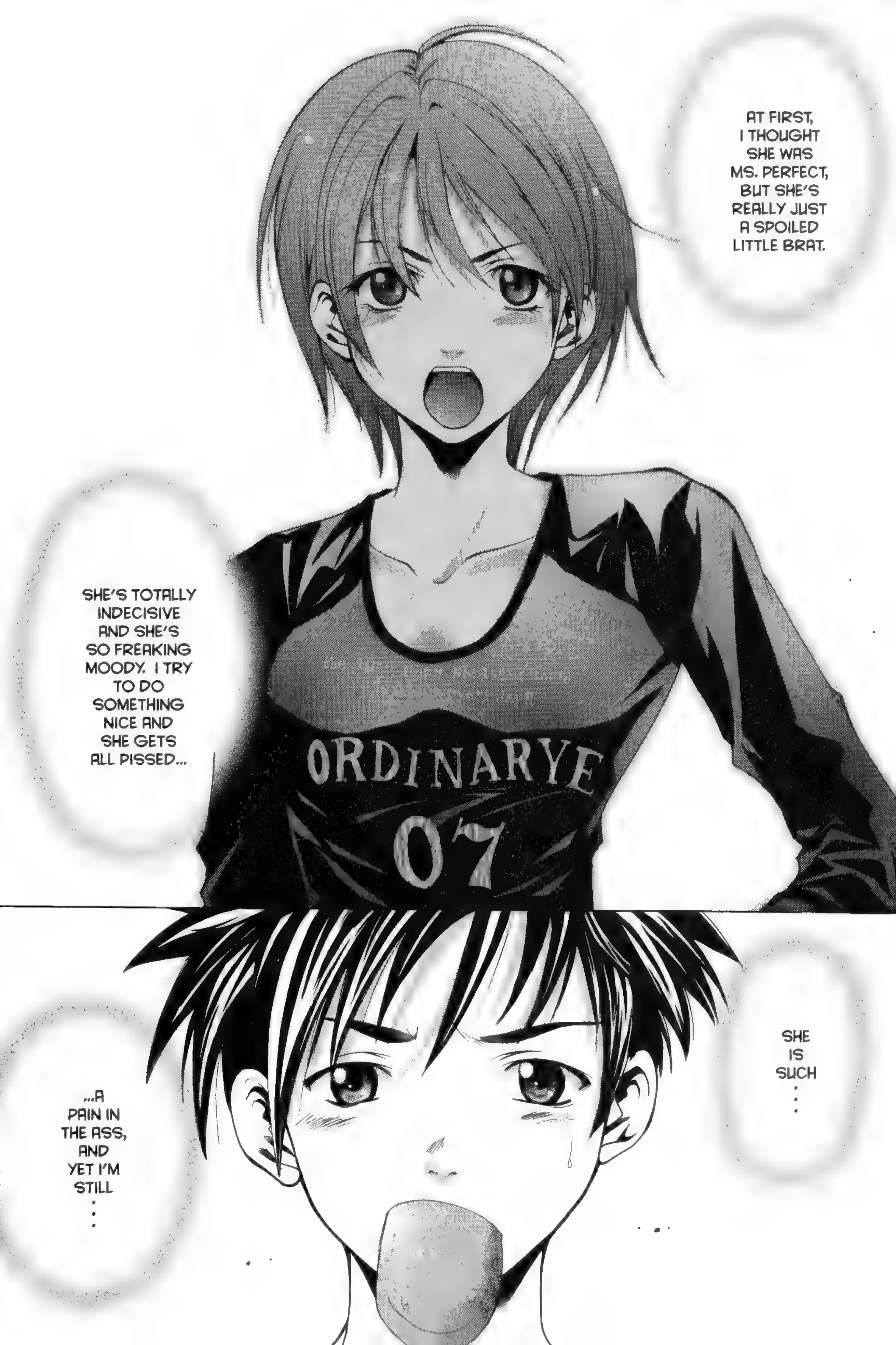

W- WHAT IS HER PROBLEM?
IT'S LIKE HER MOOD GETS WORSE EVERY TIME I SEE HER...
DOES SHE JUST HATE BEING AROUND ME?
BUT... SHE JUST SAID SHE DOESN'T HATE ME ANYMORE...
...HUH?
ISN'T YOUR LAUNDRY DONE YET?
H-HEY.
......
DON'T LEAVE IT IN THE MACHINE TOO LONG, IT'LL GET ALL WRINKLED...
SHUT UP!!
ビクッ
SHOCK

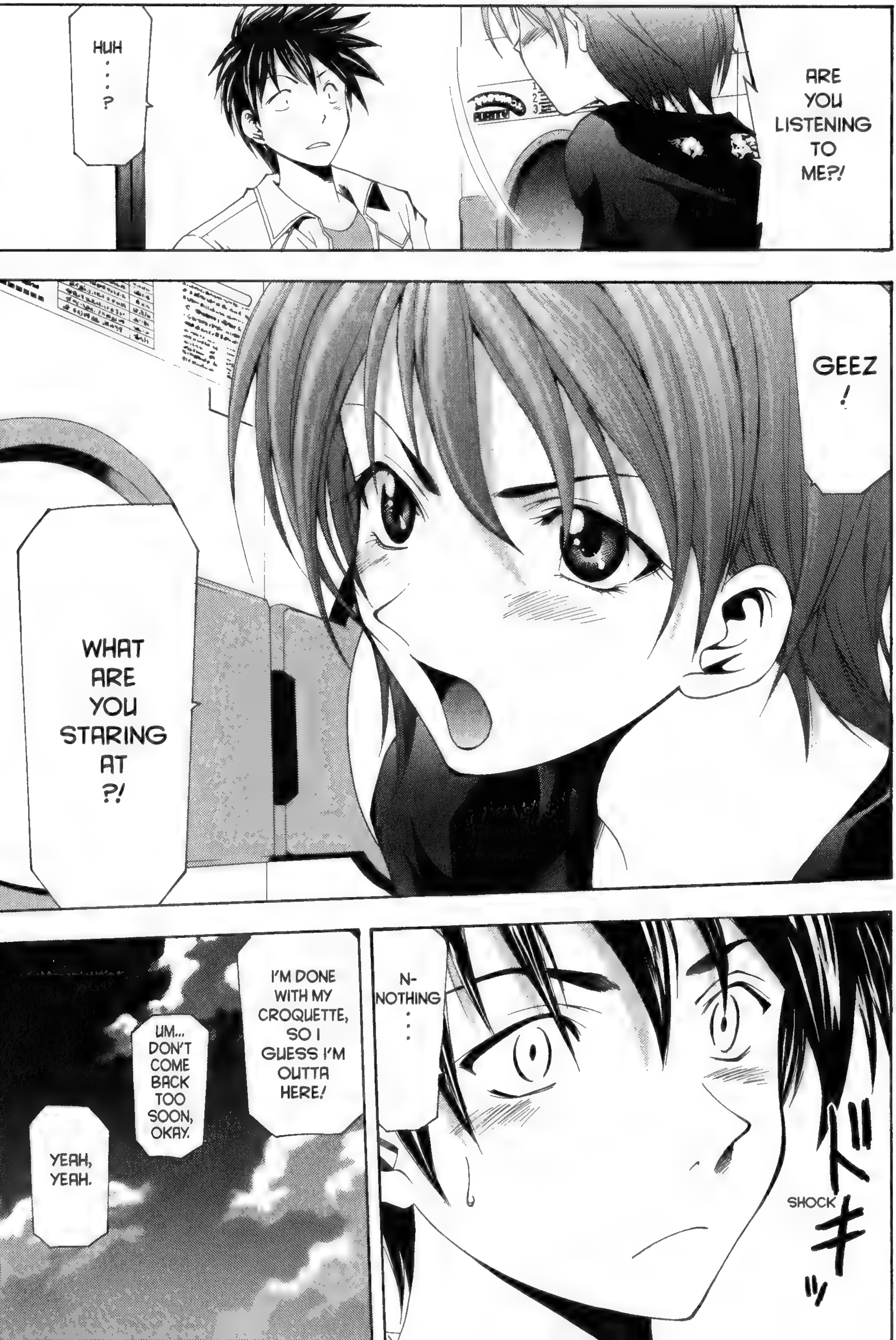

UH... UM...
オロ WOBBLE
オロ WOBBLE
YOU KNOW DAMN WELL I CAN'T TAKE IT OUT.
WHAT?
HOW THE HELL DO YOU EXPECT ME TO TAKE IT OUT...
...WITH YOU STANDING THERE!! IT'S TOO EMBARRASSING!
WHAT...?
WHY?
DON'T YOU GET IT?! I'VE GOT UNDERWEAR AND STUFF IN THERE! OKAY!?
....

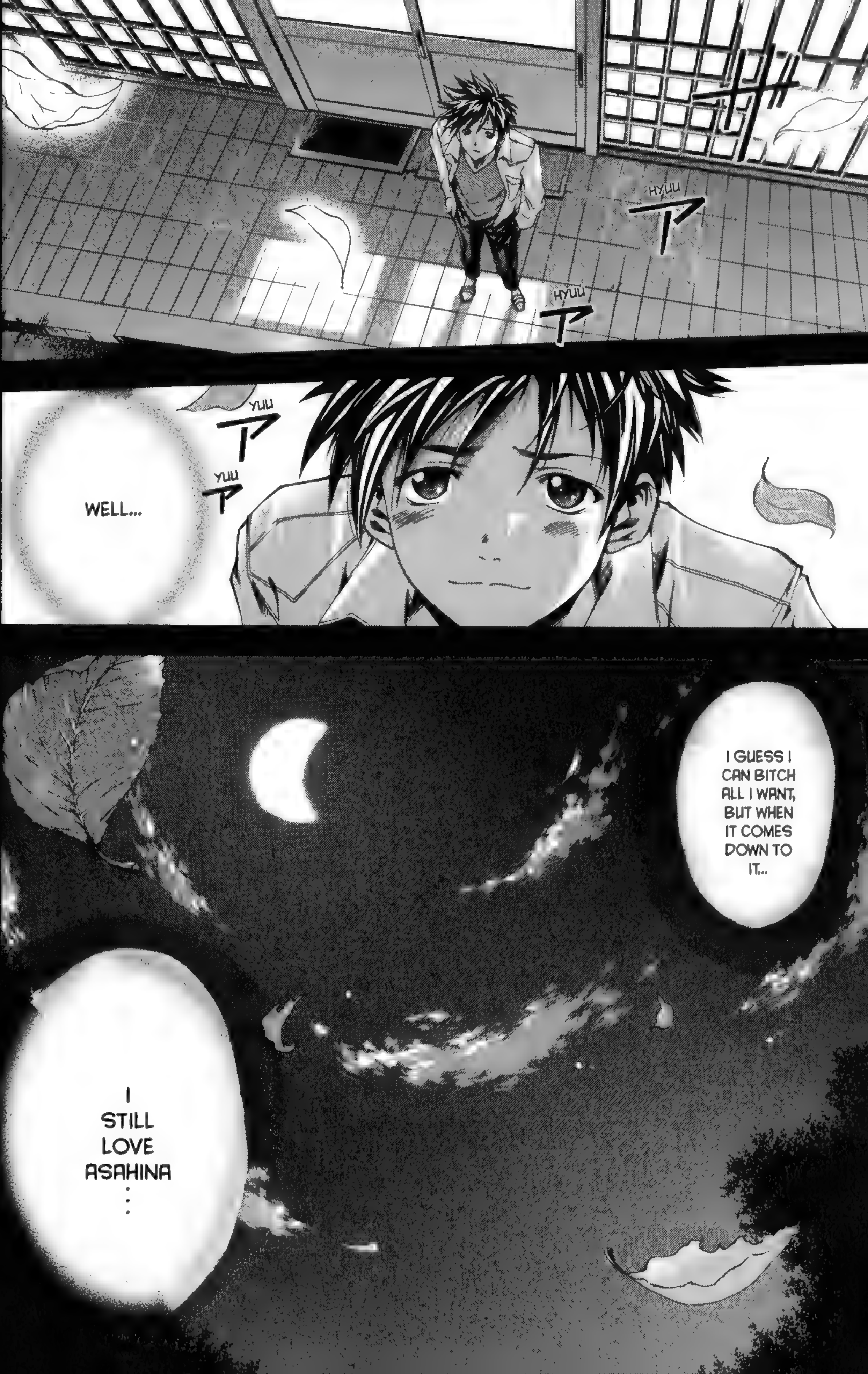

OH, OKAY... I GET IT!
SO SHE WAS JUST ANNOYED BECAUSE SHE COULDN'T TAKE OUT HER UNDERWEAR!!
S-SORRY. I GUESS I WASN'T THINKING!
I'M GONNA GO TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE.
CLANK
UM... WAIT A SECOND!
W-WHAT?
....
MAYBE I WILL HAVE ONE...

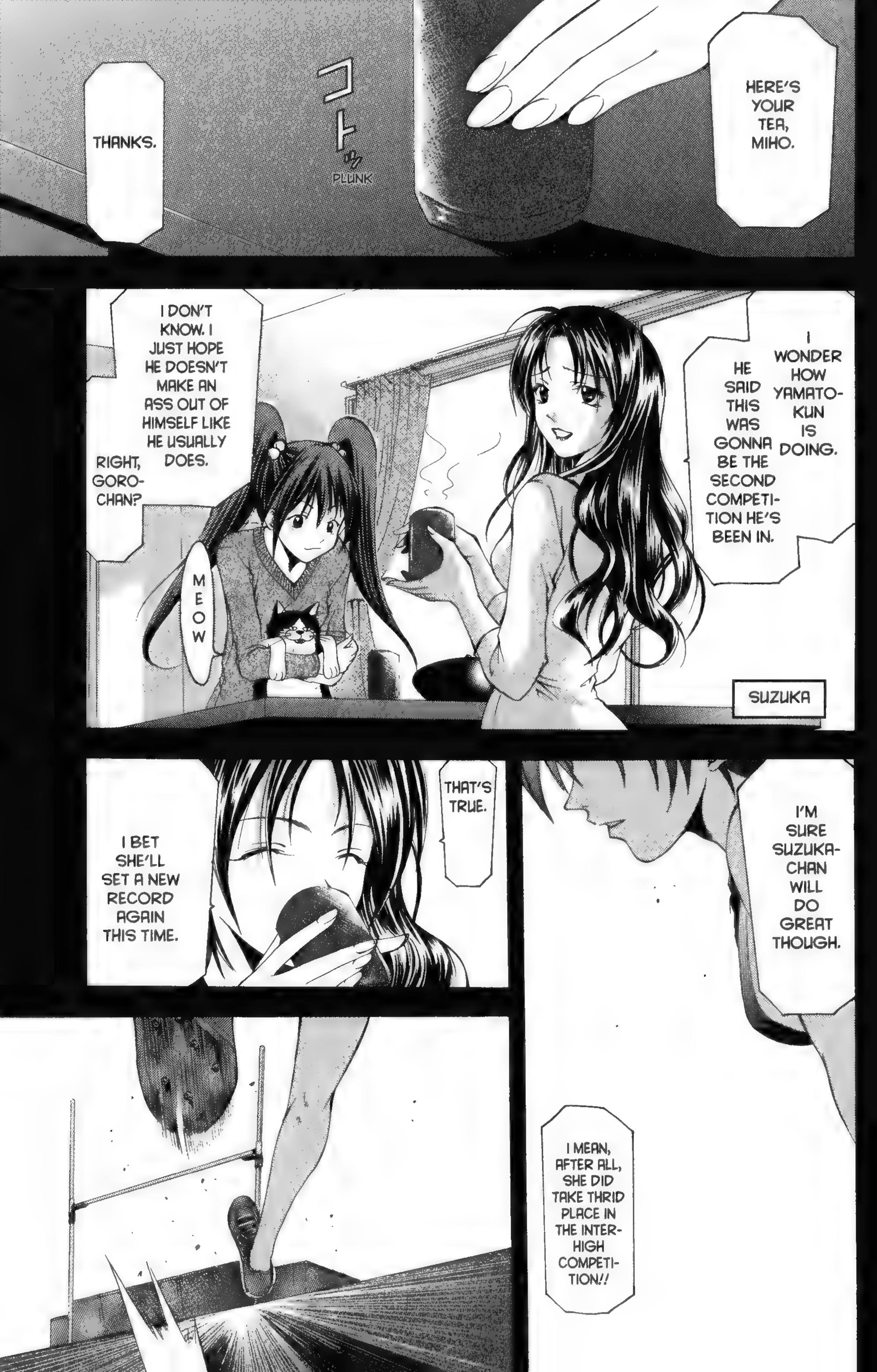

HUH? ONE WHAT?
ONE OF YOUR CROQUETTES. I'M KINDA HUNGRY SO, I'LL HAVE ONE.
SO YOU DO WANT ONE?
IS THAT A PROBLEM?
NO. IT'S NOT A PROBLEM... WELL, ENJOY YOUR CROQUETTE.
洗剤
PURITY
ORDINARYE
I SAID WAIT!
NOW WHAT?
I CAN'T EAT A CROQUETTE IN HERE ALL BY MYSELF. IT'S TOO EMBARRASSING.
DO YOU WANT TO EAT WITH ME?!
COIN WASHER 4
ひろびろステンレス槽
WHAT?


FIRST YOU TELL ME TO LEAVE, AND NOW YOU WANT ME TO EAT WITH YOU...
I DON'T GET YOU AT ALL.
GOD!
I'M SAYING EAT WITH ME, AND THEN GET THE HELL OUT!!
PURITY
洗剤
ソフター
GEEZ, THAT'S HOW YOU ACT WHEN SOMEONE OFFERS TO SHARE SOMETHING WITH YOU?
CAN YOU AT LEAST PRETEND TO BE GRATEFUL...
FORGET IT. JUST KEEP IT!
HMMPH
プイッ
YOU ALWAYS DO THIS!!
YOU GOT A PROBLEM?!
I MEAN, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO...
......
GEEZ, SHE'S A REAL PIECE OF WORK...
PURITY
乾燥機

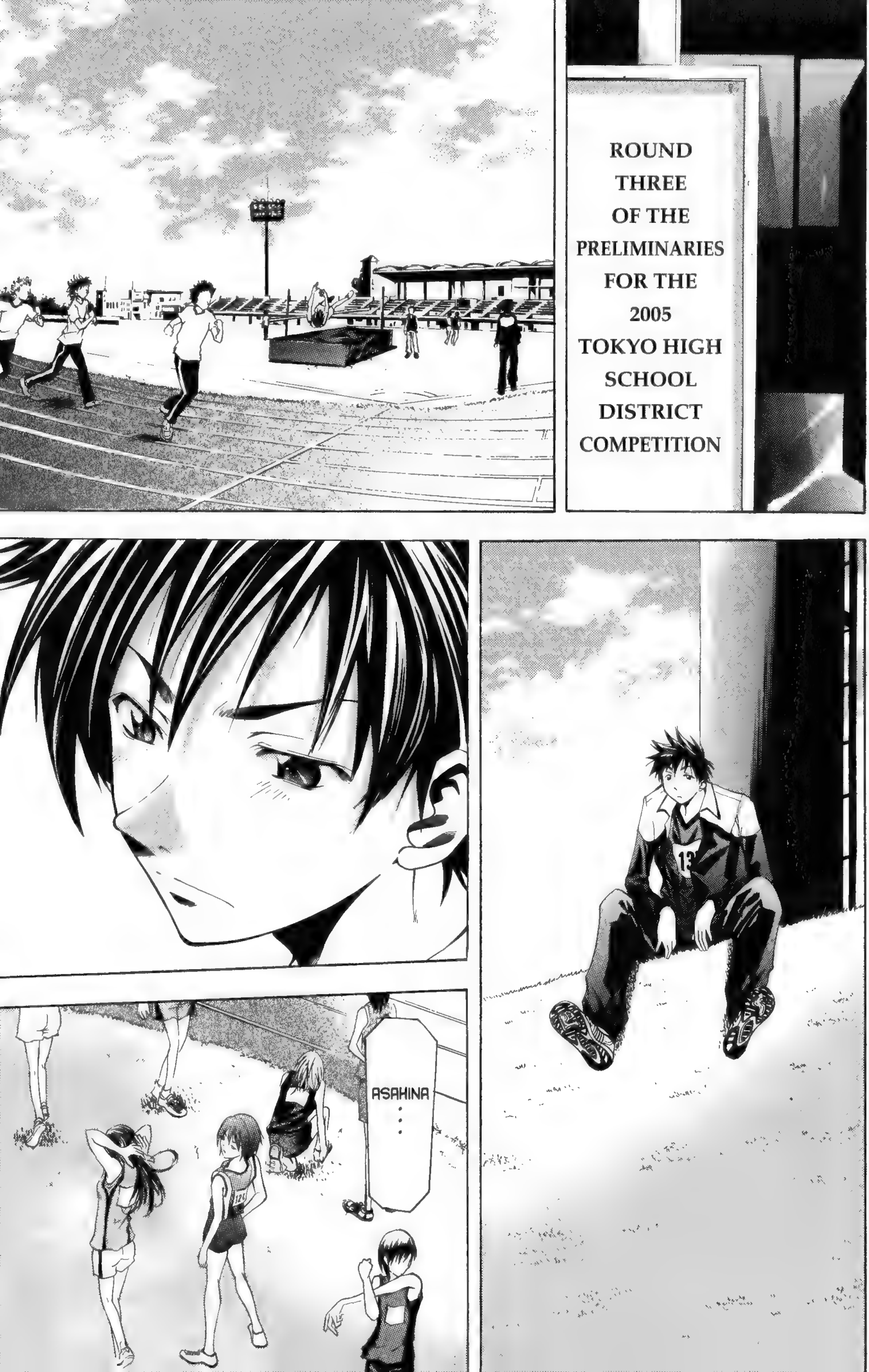

AT FIRST, I THOUGHT SHE WAS MS. PERFECT, BUT SHE'S REALLY JUST A SPOILED LITTLE BRAT.
SHE'S TOTALLY INDECISIVE AND SHE'S SO FREAKING MOODY. I TRY TO DO SOMETHING NICE AND SHE GETS ALL PISSED...
ORDINARYE
07
SHE IS SUCH . . .
...A PAIN IN THE ASS, AND YET I'M STILL . . .

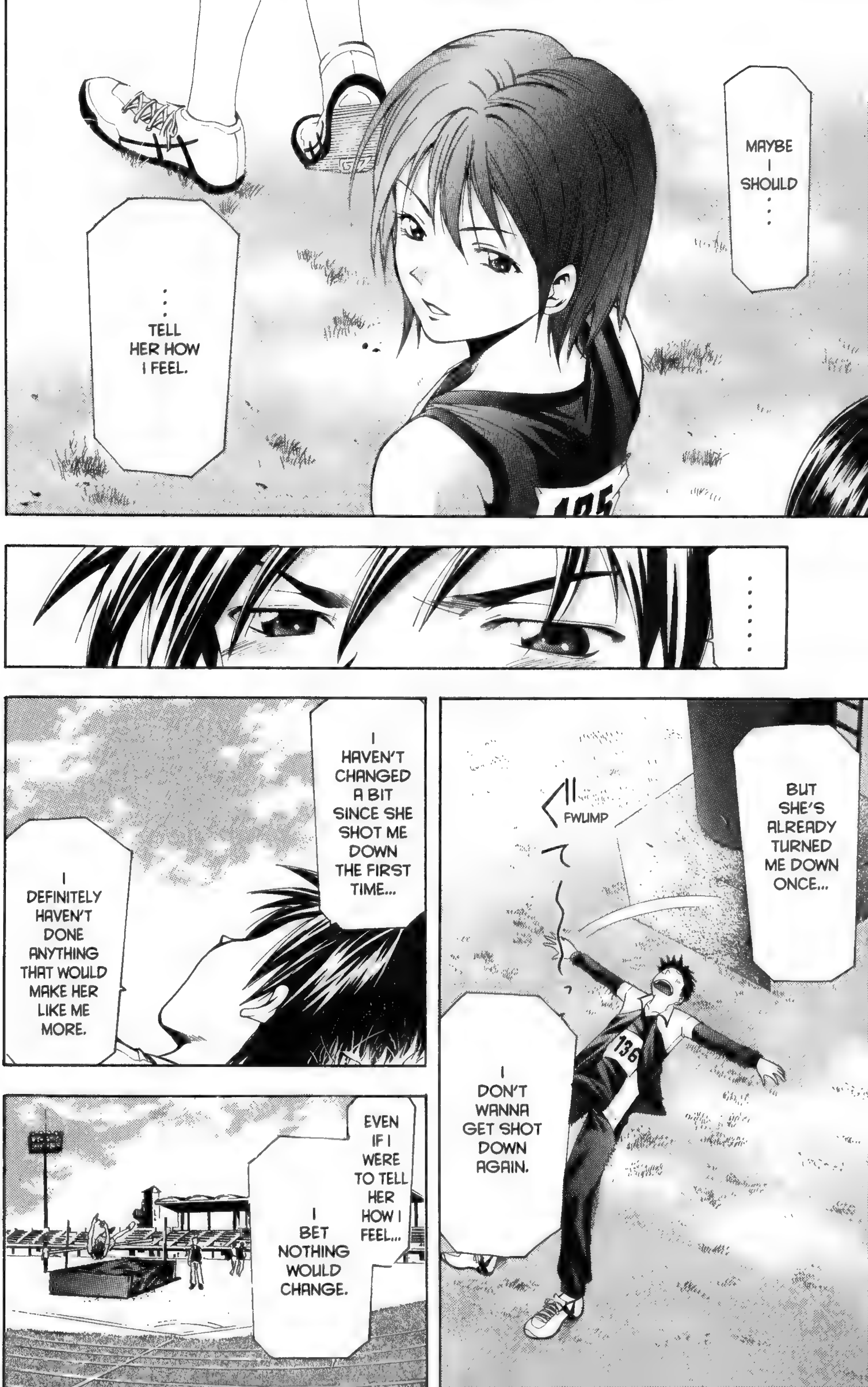

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
HUH...?
GEEZ!
WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?!
N-NOTHING...
ドキッ
SHOCK
I'M DONE WITH MY CROQUETTE, SO I GUESS I'M OUTTA HERE!
UM... DON'T COME BACK TOO SOON, OKAY.
YEAH, YEAH.

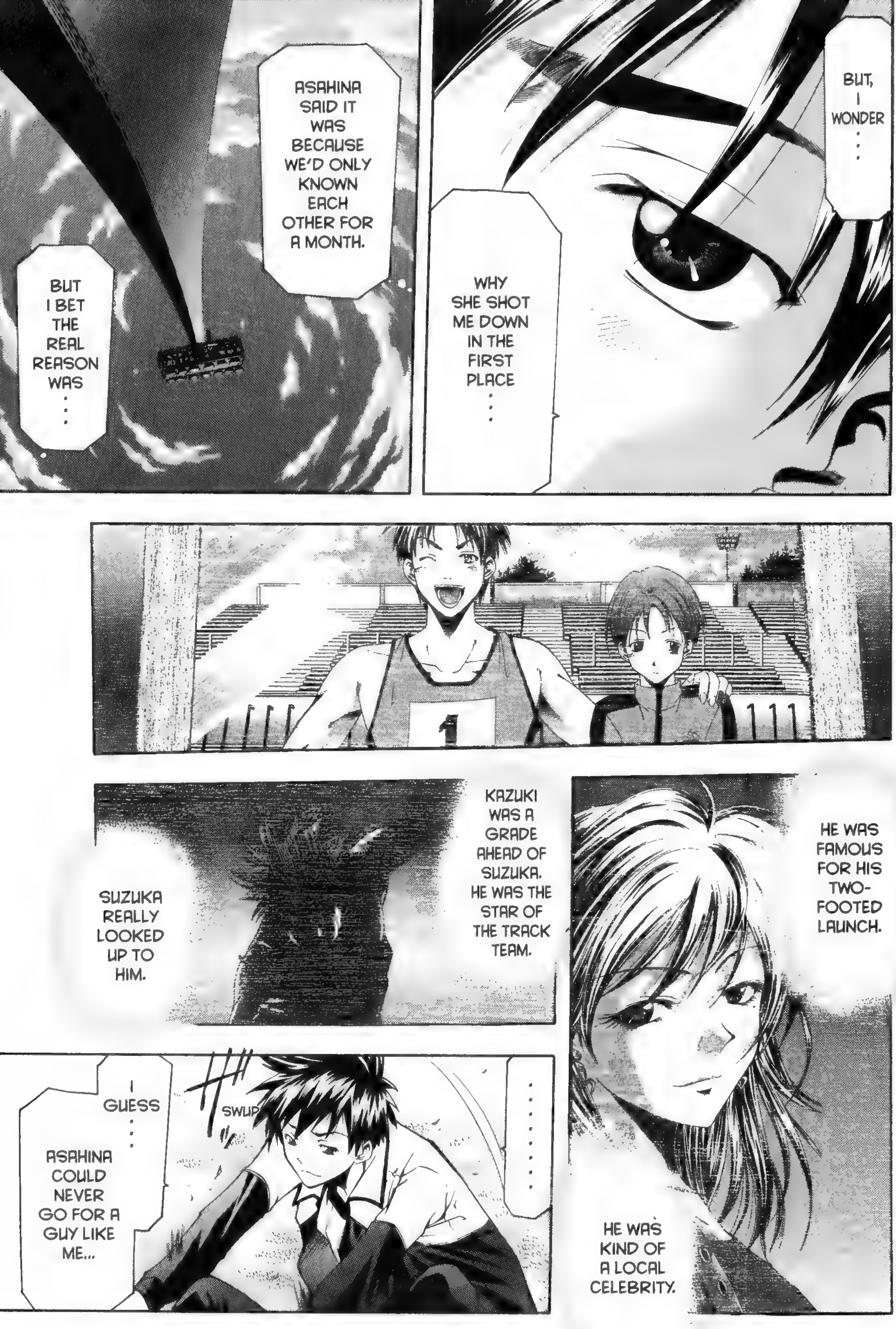

HYUU ア
HYUU ア
YUU ア
YUU ア
WELL...
I GUESS I CAN BITCH ALL I WANT, BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT...
I STILL LOVE ASAHINA...

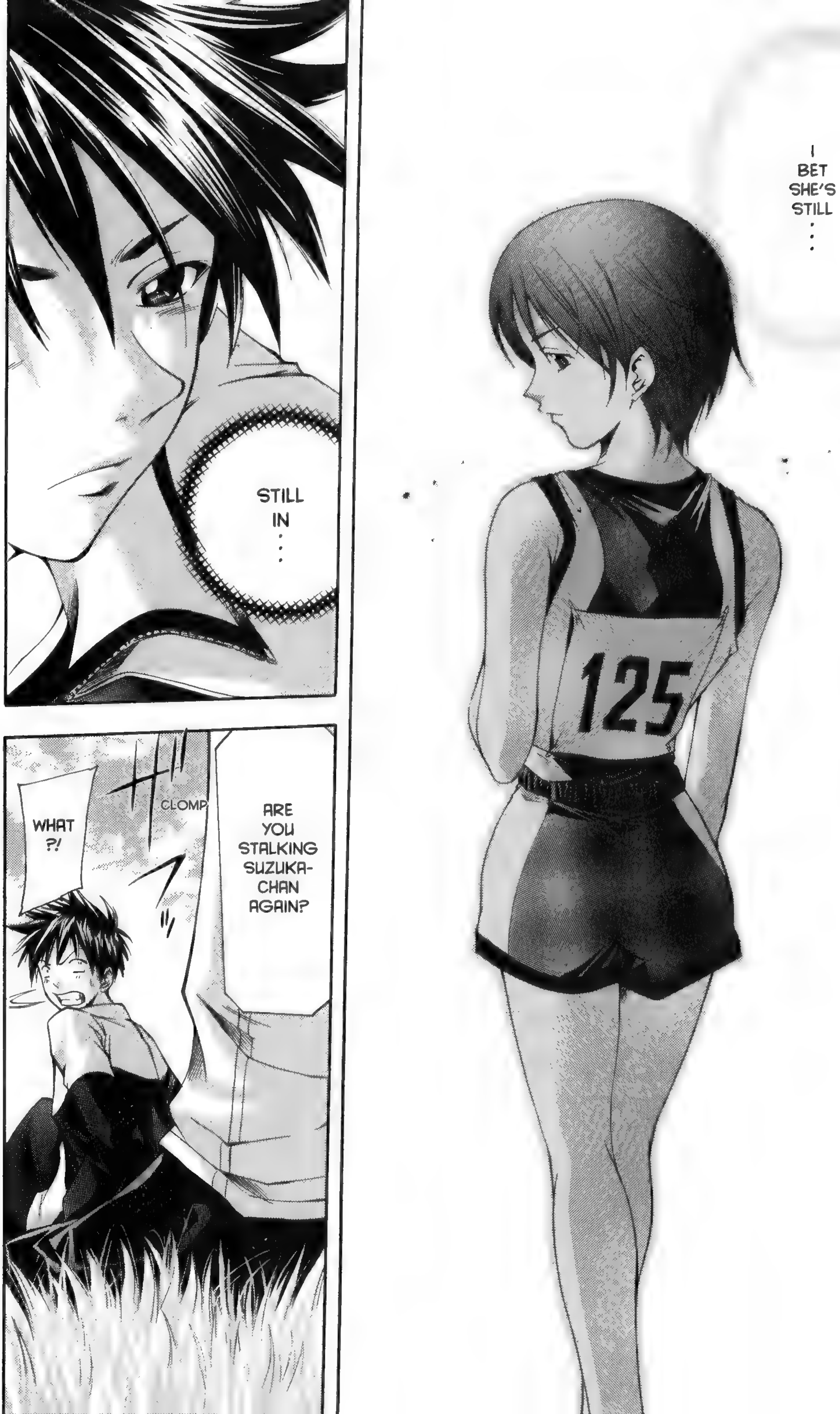

HERE'S YOUR TEA, MIHO.
コト
PLUNK
THANKS.
I WONDER HOW YAMATO-KUN IS DOING.
HE SAID THIS WAS GONNA BE THE SECOND COMPETITION HE'S BEEN IN.
SUZUKA
I DON'T KNOW. I JUST HOPE HE DOESN'T MAKE AN ASS OUT OF HIMSELF LIKE HE USUALLY DOES.
RIGHT, GORO-CHAN?
MEOW
I'M SURE SUZUKA-CHAN WILL DO GREAT THOUGH.
I MEAN, AFTER ALL, SHE DID TAKE THRID PLACE IN THE INTER-HIGH COMPETITION!!
THAT'S TRUE.
I BET SHE'LL SET A NEW RECORD AGAIN THIS TIME.

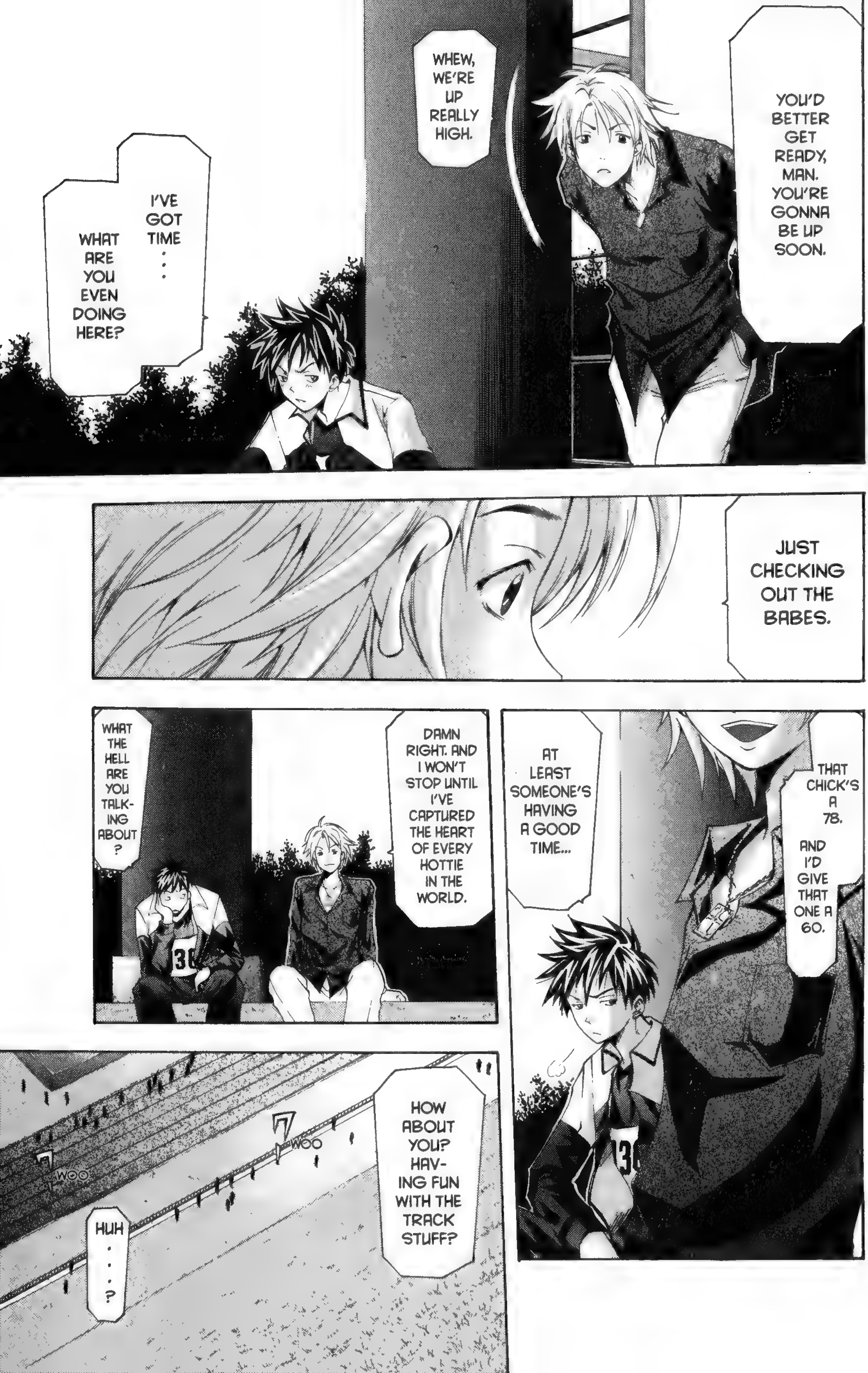
#59 RESOLUTION

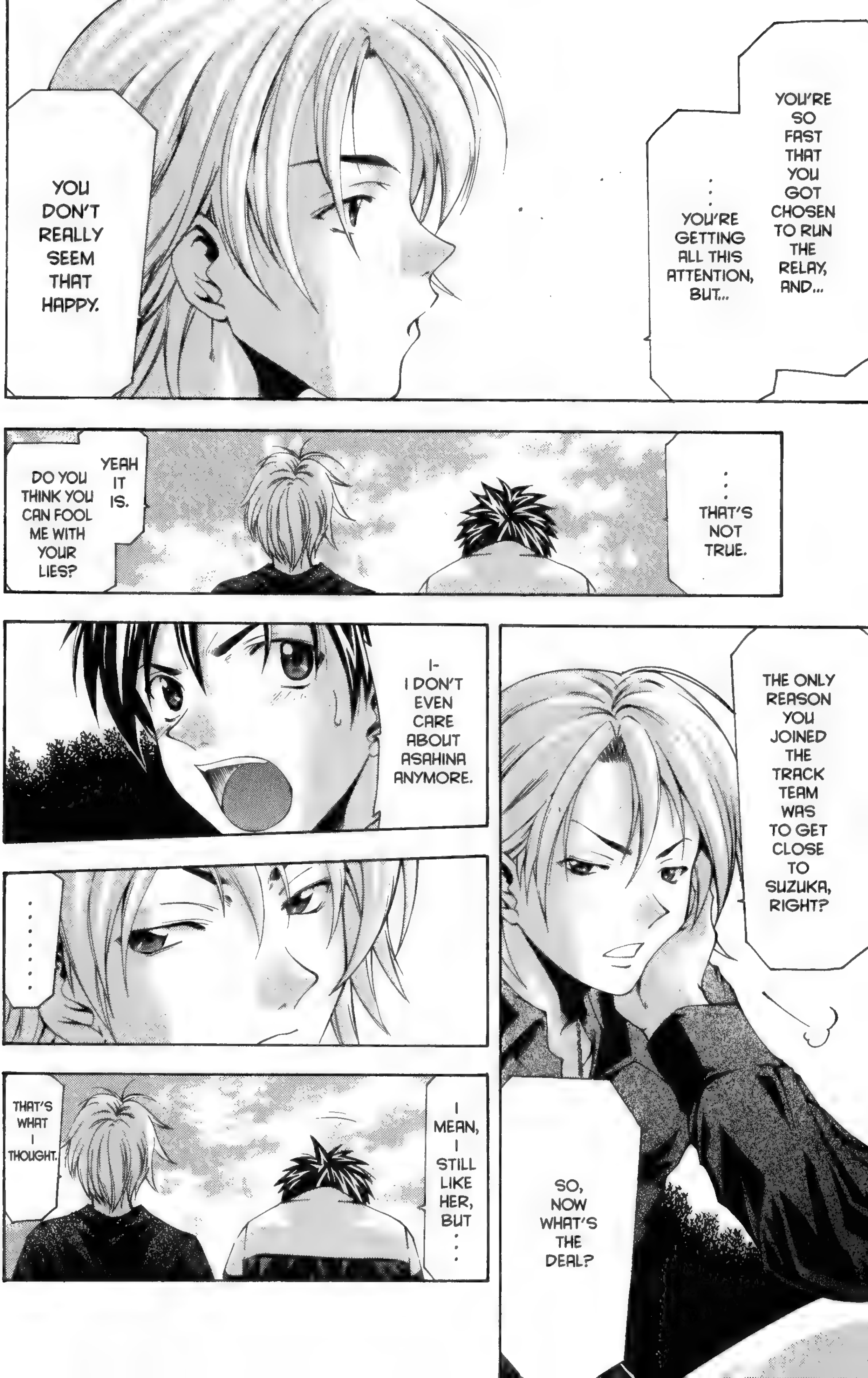

ROUND THREE OF THE PRELIMINARIES FOR THE 2005 TOKYO HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT COMPETITION
13
125
ASAHINA . . .

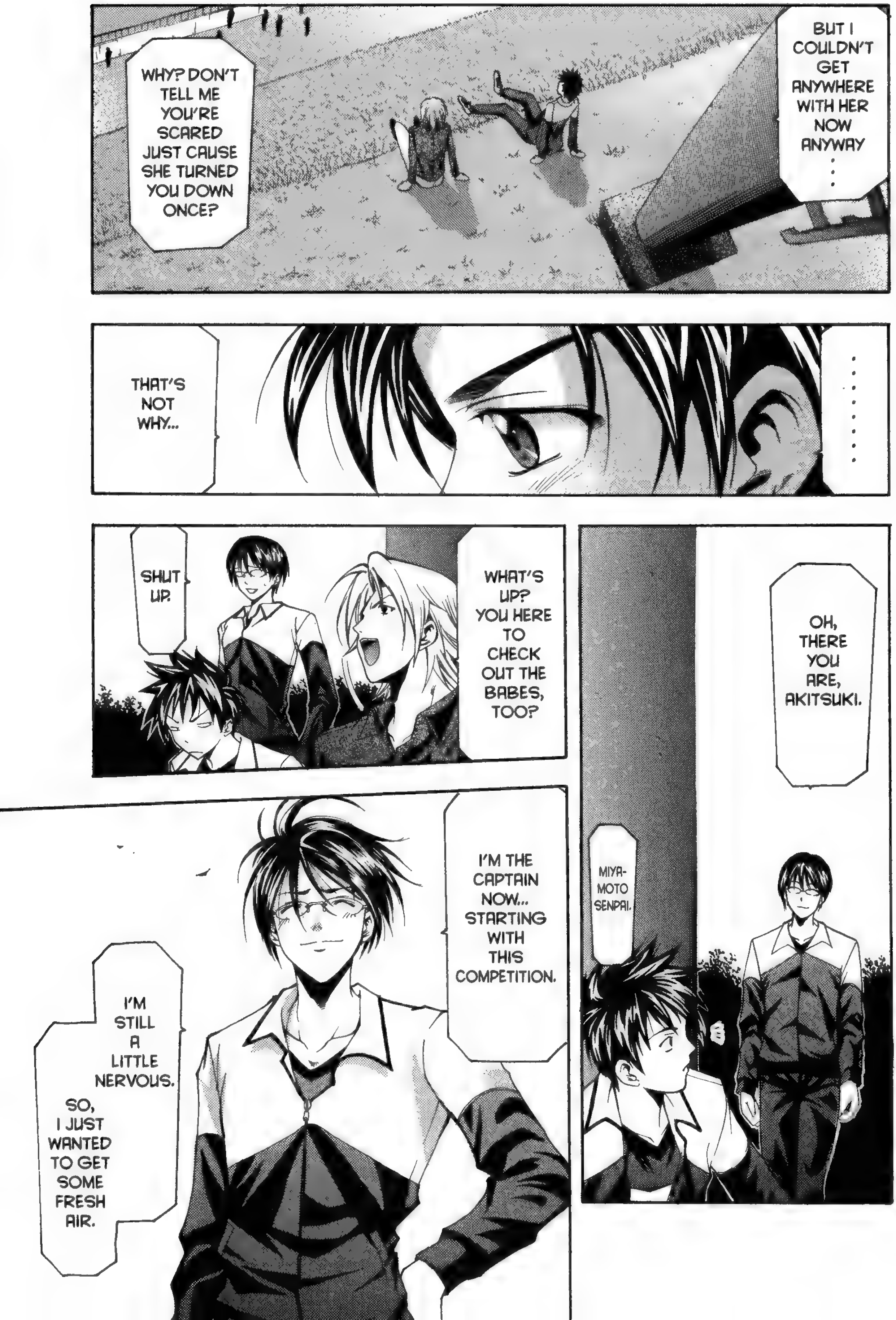

MAYBE I SHOULD...
...TELL HER HOW I FEEL.
......
BUT SHE'S ALREADY TURNED ME DOWN ONCE...
FWUMP
136
I DON'T WANNA GET SHOT DOWN AGAIN.
I HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT SINCE SHE SHOT ME DOWN THE FIRST TIME...
I DEFINITELY HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING THAT WOULD MAKE HER LIKE ME MORE.
EVEN IF I WERE TO TELL HER HOW I FEEL...
I BET NOTHING WOULD CHANGE.

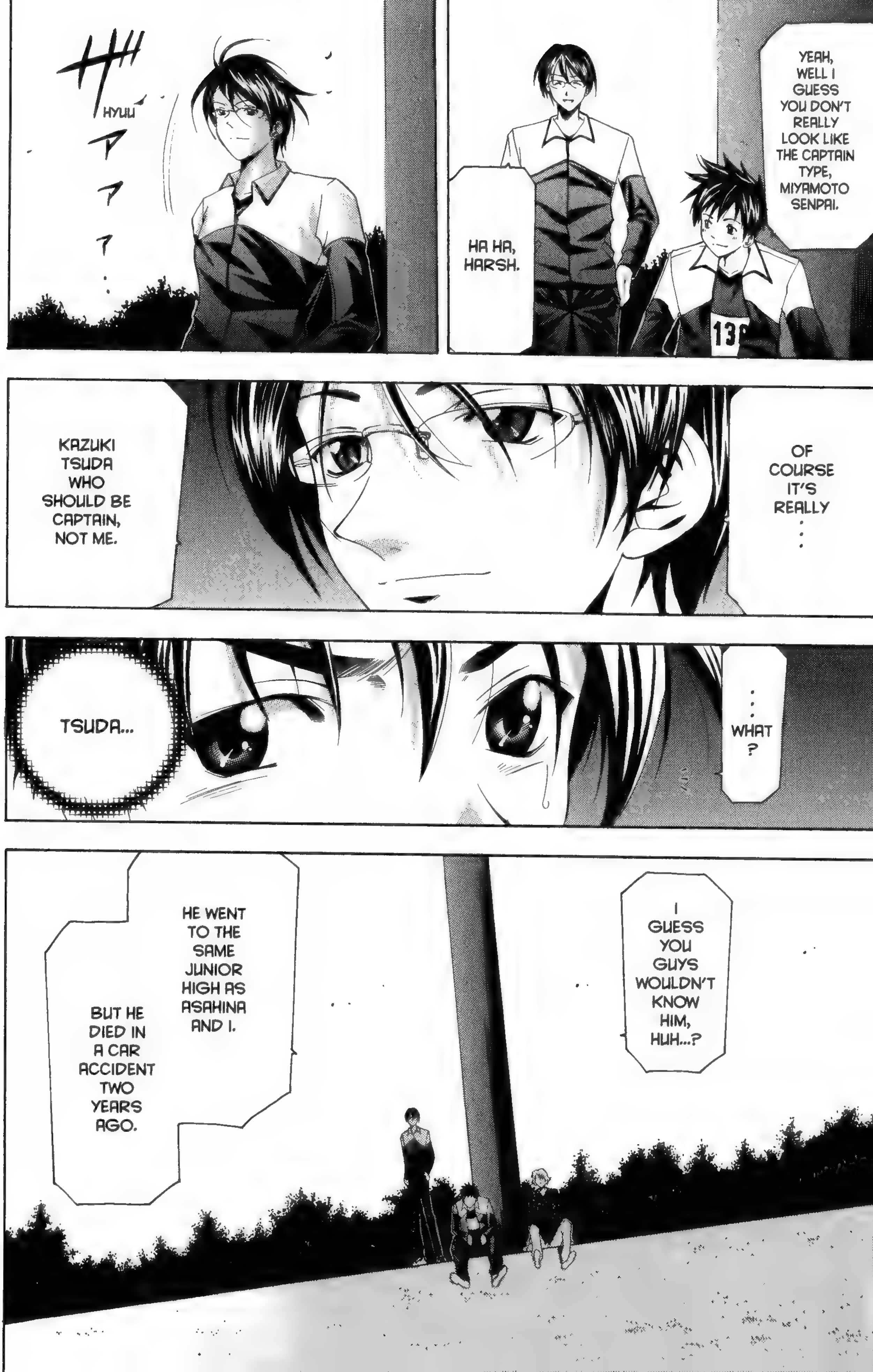

BUT, I WONDER . . .
WHY SHE SHOT ME DOWN IN THE FIRST PLACE . . .
ASAHINA SAID IT WAS BECAUSE WE'D ONLY KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A MONTH.
BUT I BET THE REAL REASON WAS . . .
1
KAZUKI WAS A GRADE AHEAD OF SUZUKA. HE WAS THE STAR OF THE TRACK TEAM.
SUZUKA REALLY LOOKED UP TO HIM.
HE WAS FAMOUS FOR HIS TWO-FOOTED LAUNCH.
HE WAS KIND OF A LOCAL CELEBRITY.
. . . .
SWUP
I GUESS . . . ASAHINA COULD NEVER GO FOR A GUY LIKE ME...

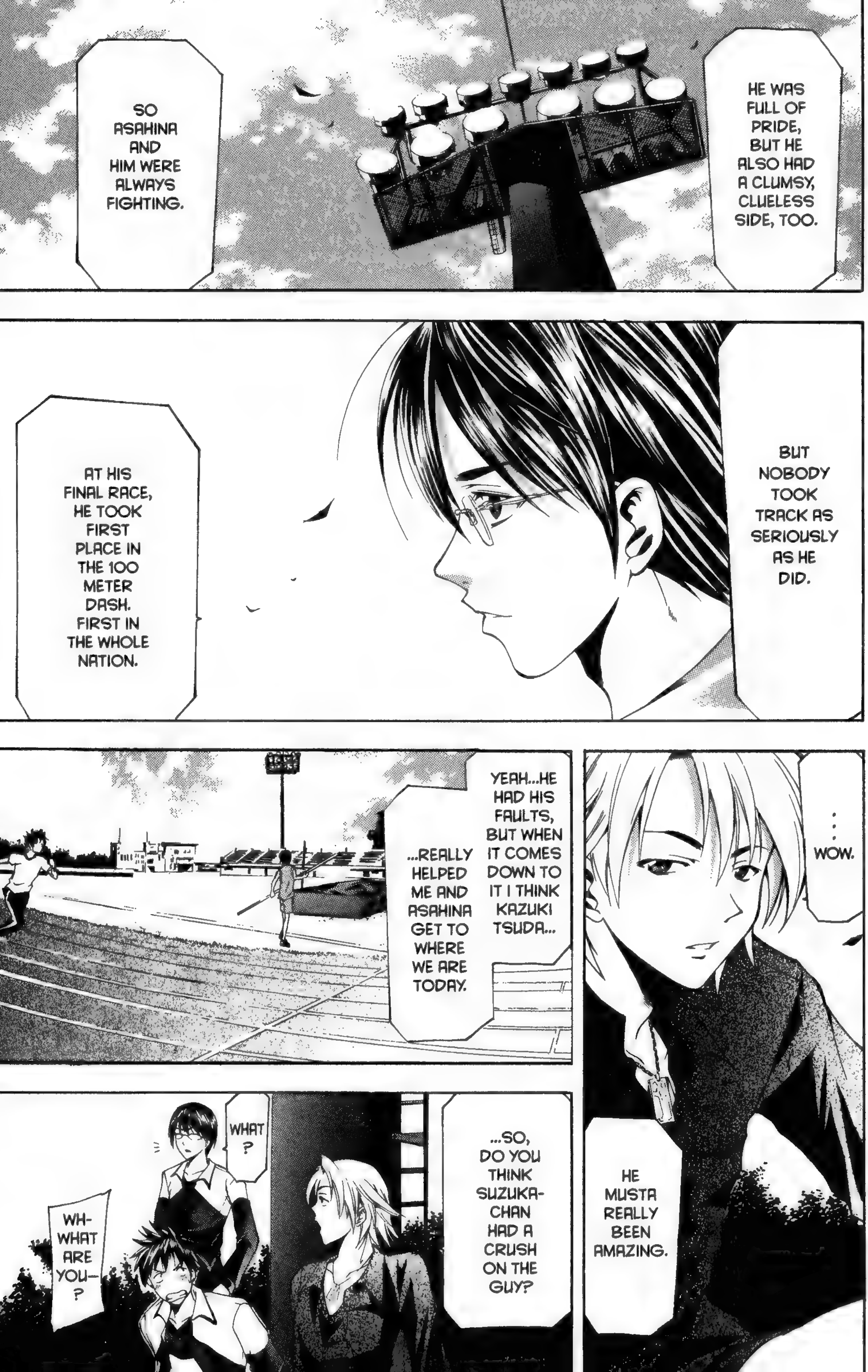

I BET SHE'S STILL . . .
125
STILL IN . . .
ARE YOU STALKING SUZUKA-CHAN AGAIN?
CLOMP
WHAT ?!

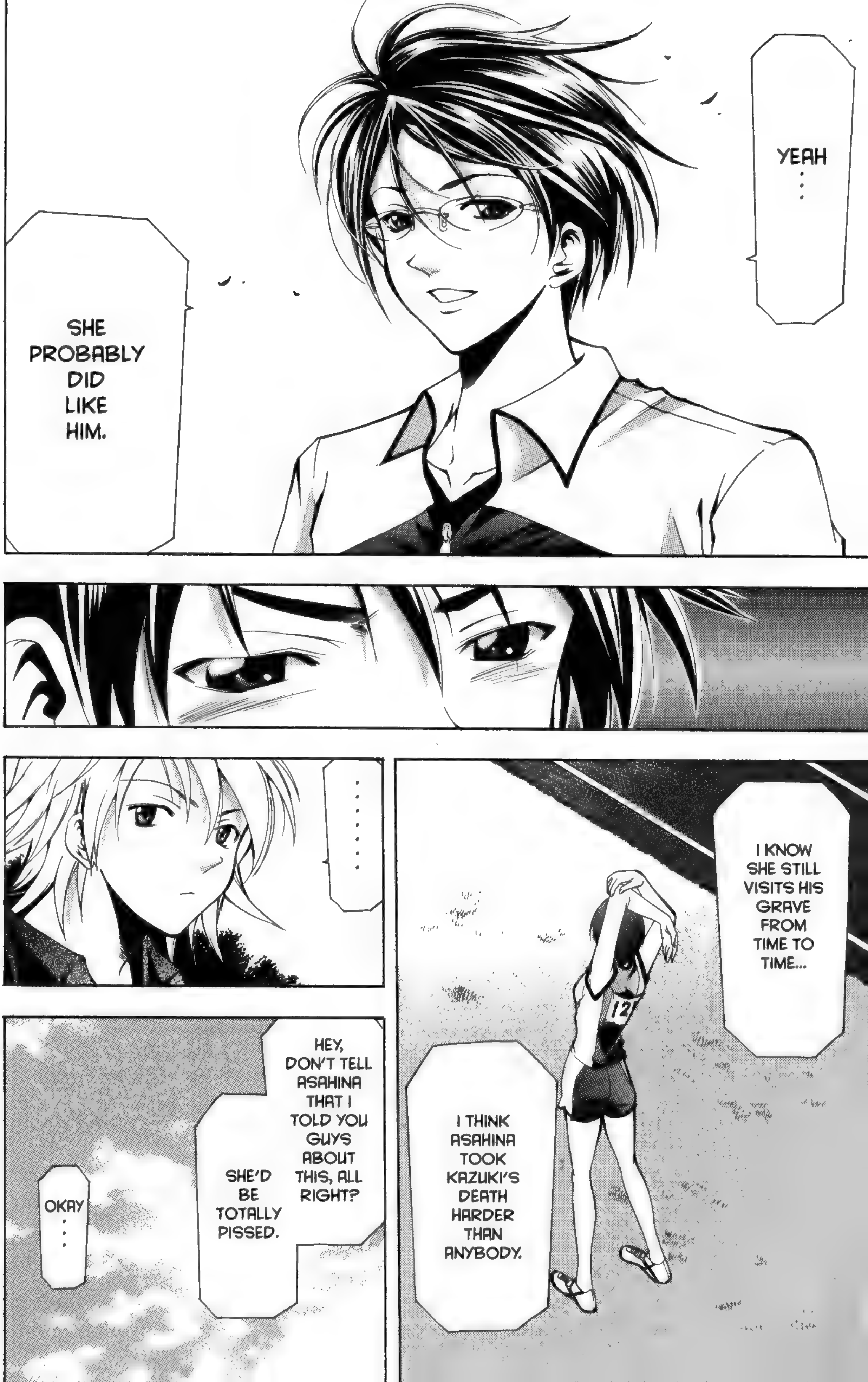

YOU'D BETTER GET READY, MAN. YOU'RE GONNA BE UP SOON.
WHEW, WE'RE UP REALLY HIGH.
I'VE GOT TIME . . .
WHAT ARE YOU EVEN DOING HERE?
JUST CHECKING OUT THE BABES.
THAT CHICK'S A 78.
AND I'D GIVE THAT ONE A 60.
AT LEAST SOMEONE'S HAVING A GOOD TIME...
DAMN RIGHT. AND I WON'T STOP UNTIL I'VE CAPTURED THE HEART OF EVERY HOTTIE IN THE WORLD.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
HOW ABOUT YOU? HAVING FUN WITH THE TRACK STUFF?
WOO
WOO
HUH . . . ?

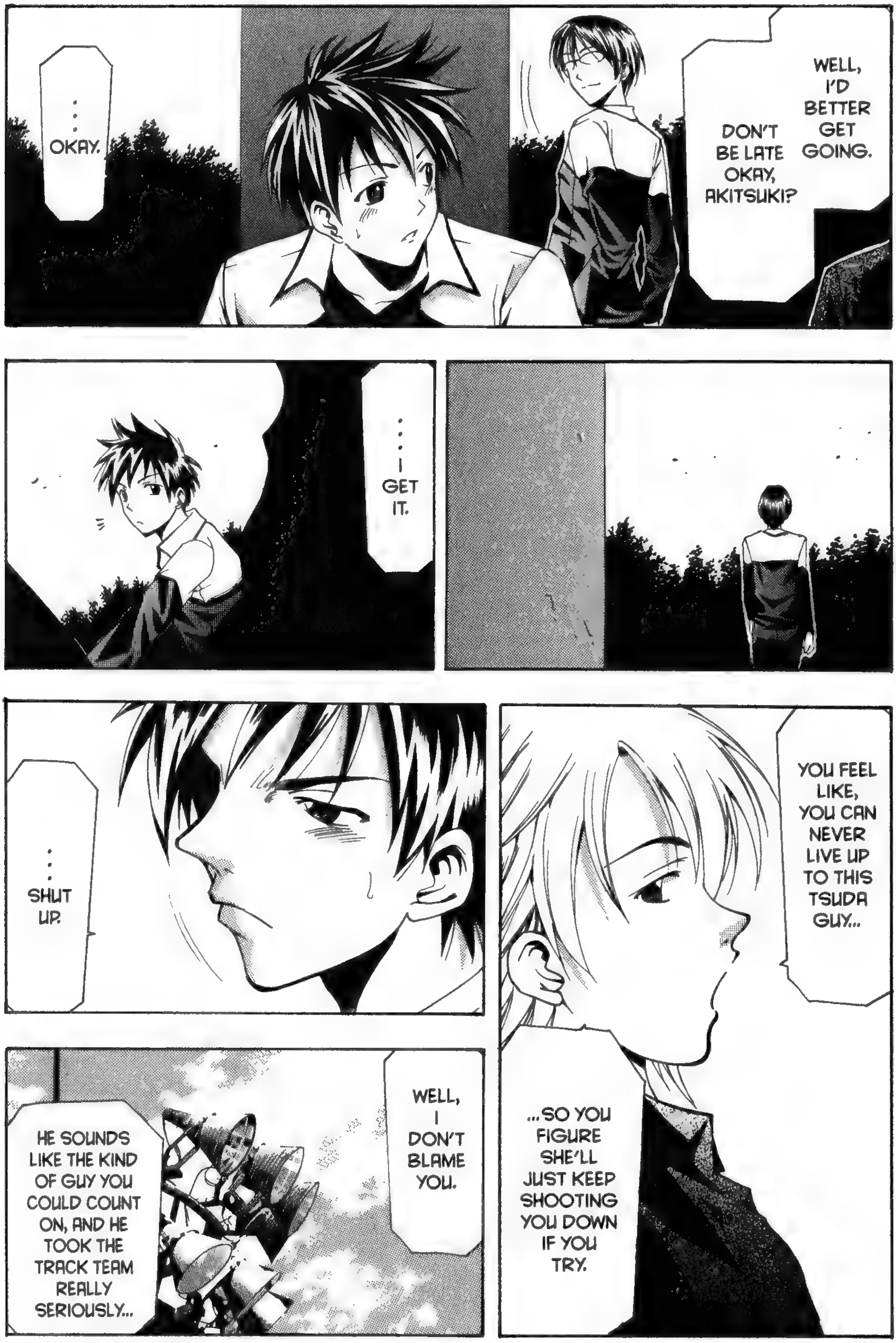

YOU'RE SO FAST THAT YOU GOT CHOSEN TO RUN THE RELAY, AND...
...YOU'RE GETTING ALL THIS ATTENTION, BUT...
YOU DON'T REALLY SEEM THAT HAPPY.
...THAT'S NOT TRUE.
YEAH IT IS.
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN FOOL ME WITH YOUR LIES?
THE ONLY REASON YOU JOINED THE TRACK TEAM WAS TO GET CLOSE TO SUZUKA, RIGHT?
I- I DON'T EVEN CARE ABOUT ASAHINA ANYMORE.
....
I MEAN, I STILL LIKE HER, BUT...
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
SO, NOW WHAT'S THE DEAL?

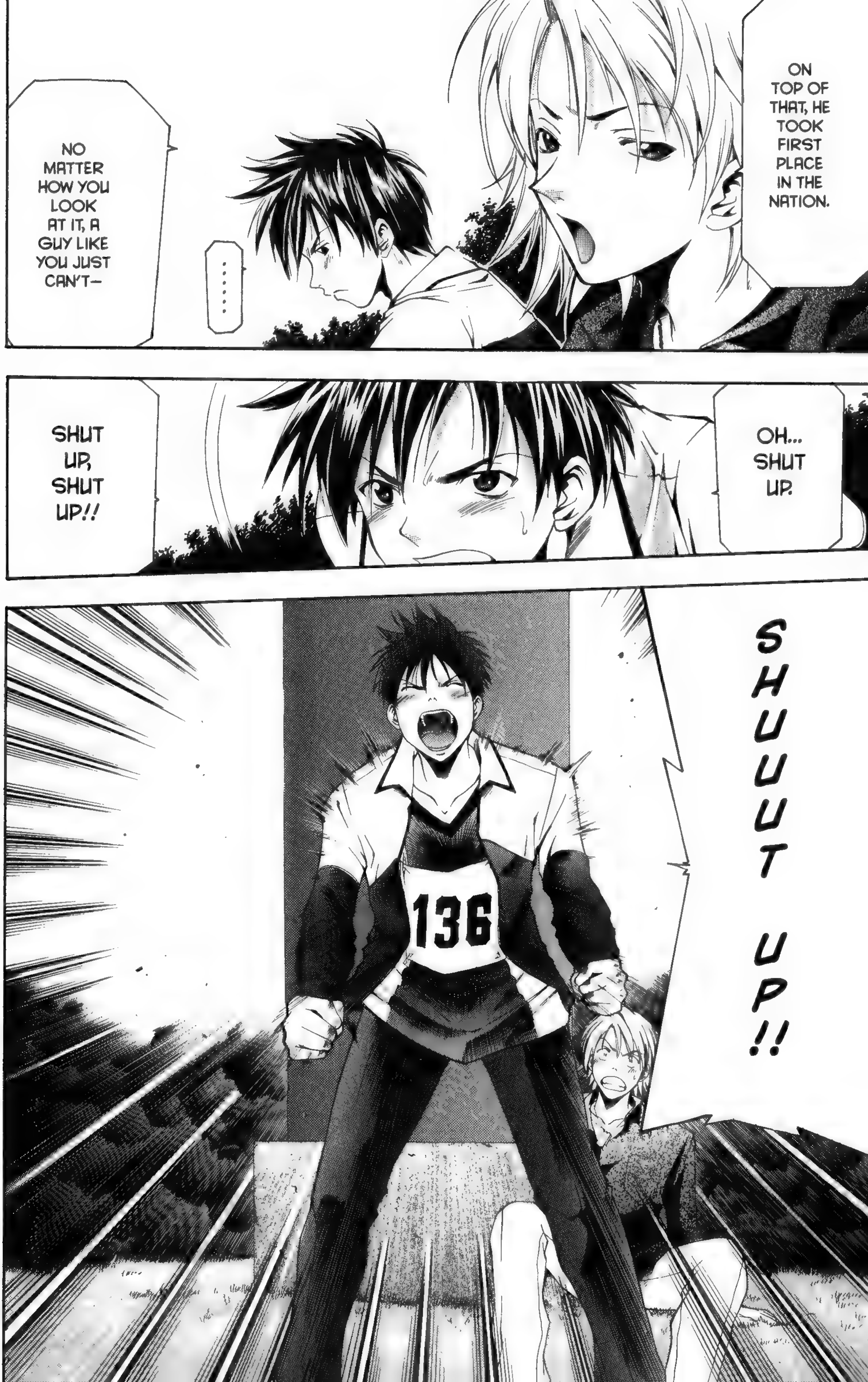

BUT I COULDN'T GET ANYWHERE WITH HER NOW ANYWAY . . .
WHY? DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE SCARED JUST CAUSE SHE TURNED YOU DOWN ONCE?
. . . .
THAT'S NOT WHY...
OH, THERE YOU ARE, AKITSUKI.
MIYA-MOTO SENPAI.
WHAT'S UP? YOU HERE TO CHECK OUT THE BABES, TOO?
SHUT UP.
I'M THE CAPTAIN NOW... STARTING WITH THIS COMPETITION.
I'M STILL A LITTLE NERVOUS.
SO, I JUST WANTED TO GET SOME FRESH AIR.

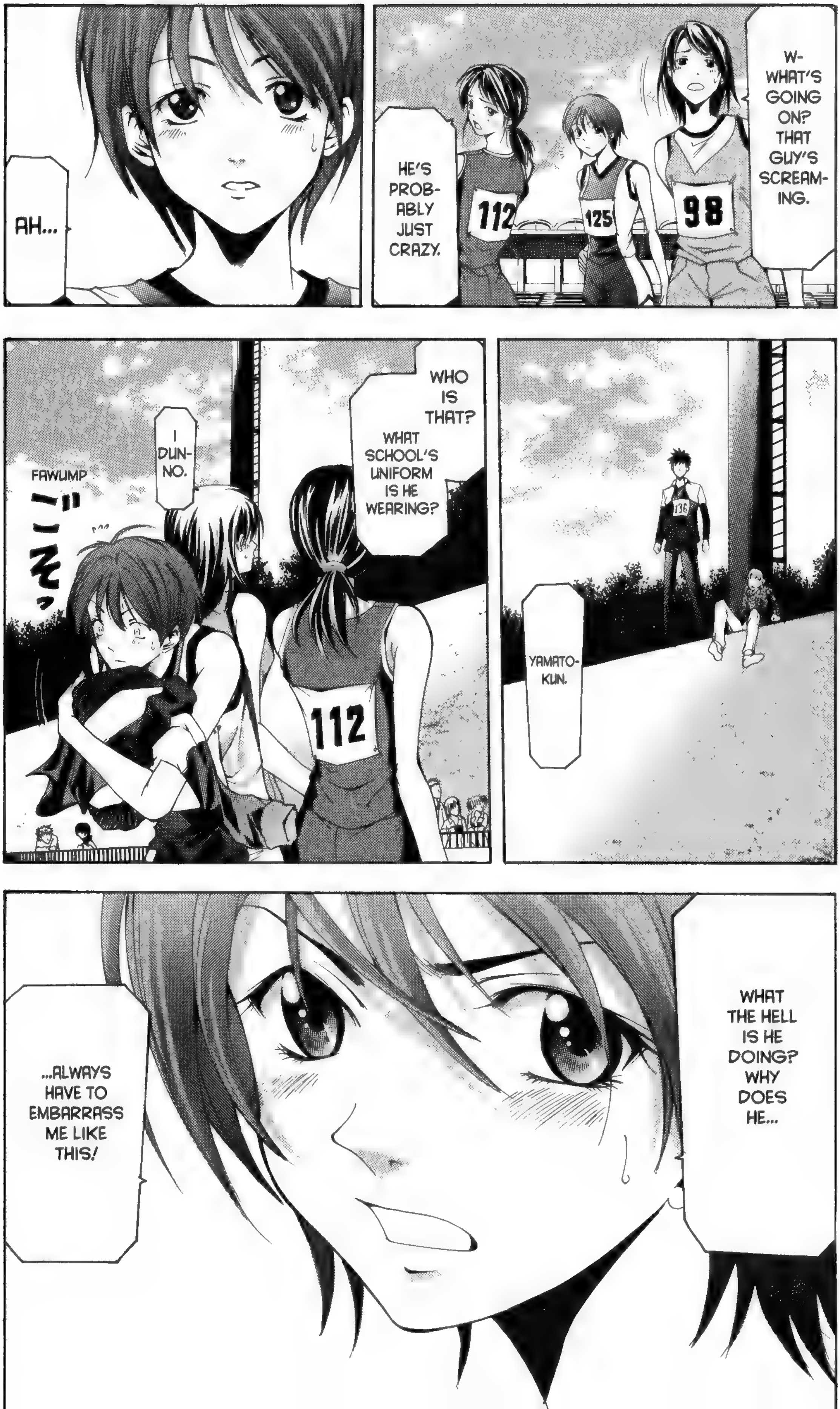

YEAH, WELL I GUESS YOU DON'T REALLY LOOK LIKE THE CAPTAIN TYPE, MIYAMOTO SENPAI.
HA HA, HARSH.
13
HYUU
OF COURSE IT'S REALLY . . .
KAZUKI TSUDA WHO SHOULD BE CAPTAIN, NOT ME.
. . . WHAT?
TSUDA...
I GUESS YOU GUYS WOULDN'T KNOW HIM, HUH...?
HE WENT TO THE SAME JUNIOR HIGH AS ASAHINA AND I.
BUT HE DIED IN A CAR ACCIDENT TWO YEARS AGO.

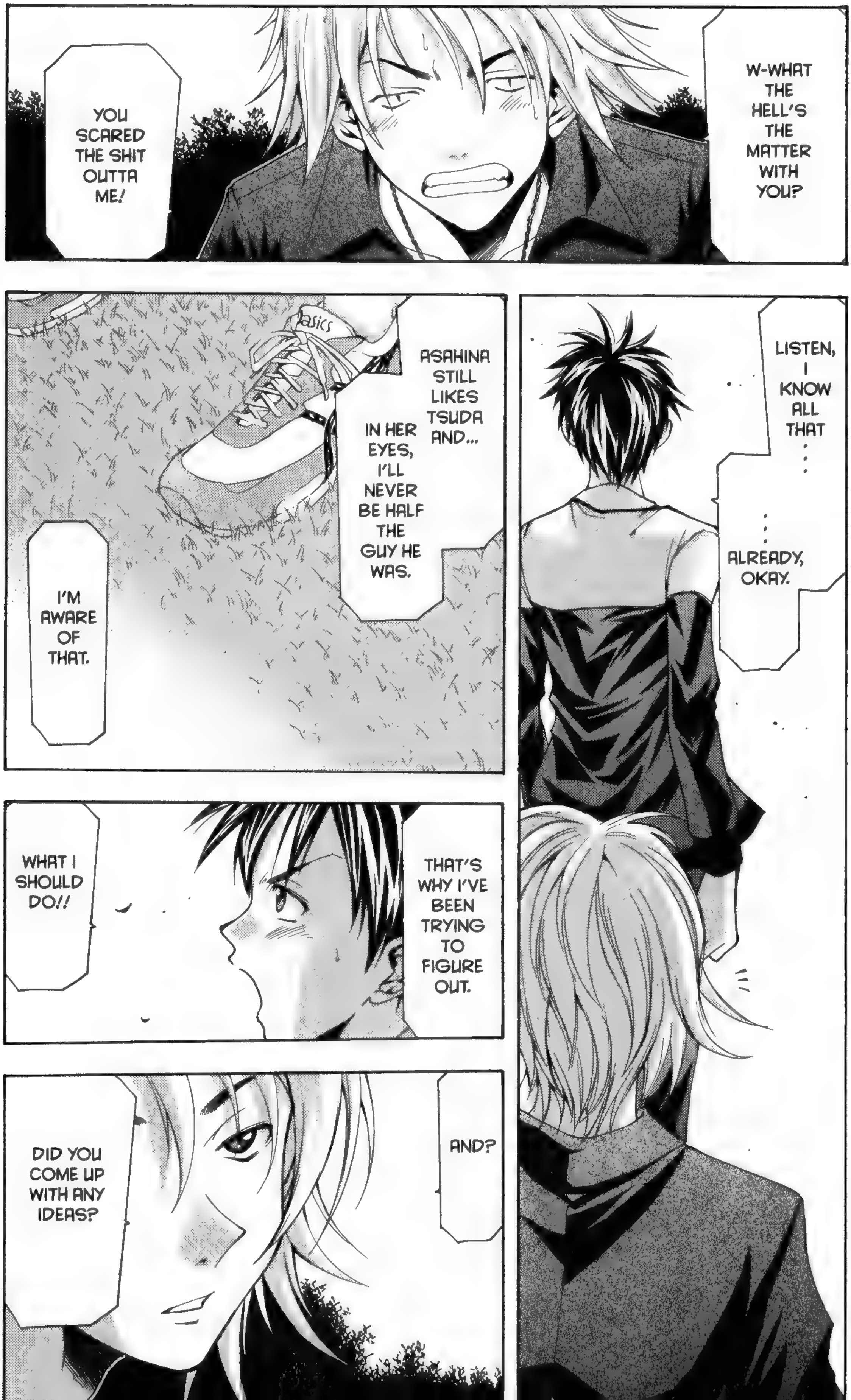

HE WAS FULL OF PRIDE, BUT HE ALSO HAD A CLUMSY, CLUELESS SIDE, TOO.
SO ASAHINA AND HIM WERE ALWAYS FIGHTING.
BUT NOBODY TOOK TRACK AS SERIOUSLY AS HE DID.
AT HIS FINAL RACE, HE TOOK FIRST PLACE IN THE 100 METER DASH. FIRST IN THE WHOLE NATION.
YEAH...HE HAD HIS FAULTS, BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT I THINK KAZUKI TSUDA...
...REALLY HELPED ME AND ASAHINA GET TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY.
...WOW.
HE MUSTA REALLY BEEN AMAZING.
...SO, DO YOU THINK SUZUKA-CHAN HAD A CRUSH ON THE GUY?
WHAT?
WH-WHAT ARE YOU-?

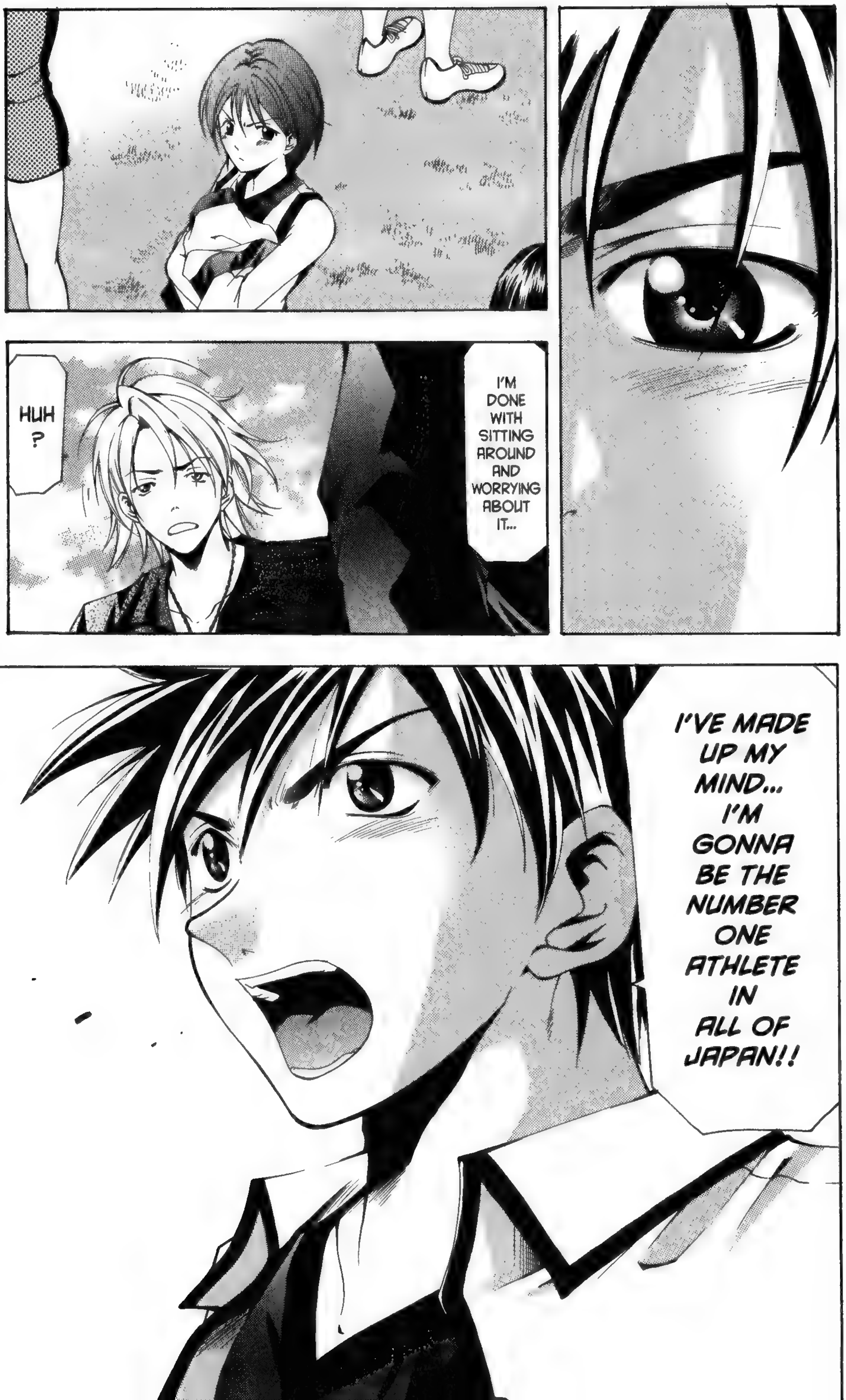

YEAH...
SHE PROBABLY DID LIKE HIM.
I KNOW SHE STILL VISITS HIS GRAVE FROM TIME TO TIME...
I THINK ASAHINA TOOK KAZUKI'S DEATH HARDER THAN ANYBODY.
....
HEY, DON'T TELL ASAHINA THAT I TOLD YOU GUYS ABOUT THIS, ALL RIGHT?
SHE'D BE TOTALLY PISSED.
OKAY...

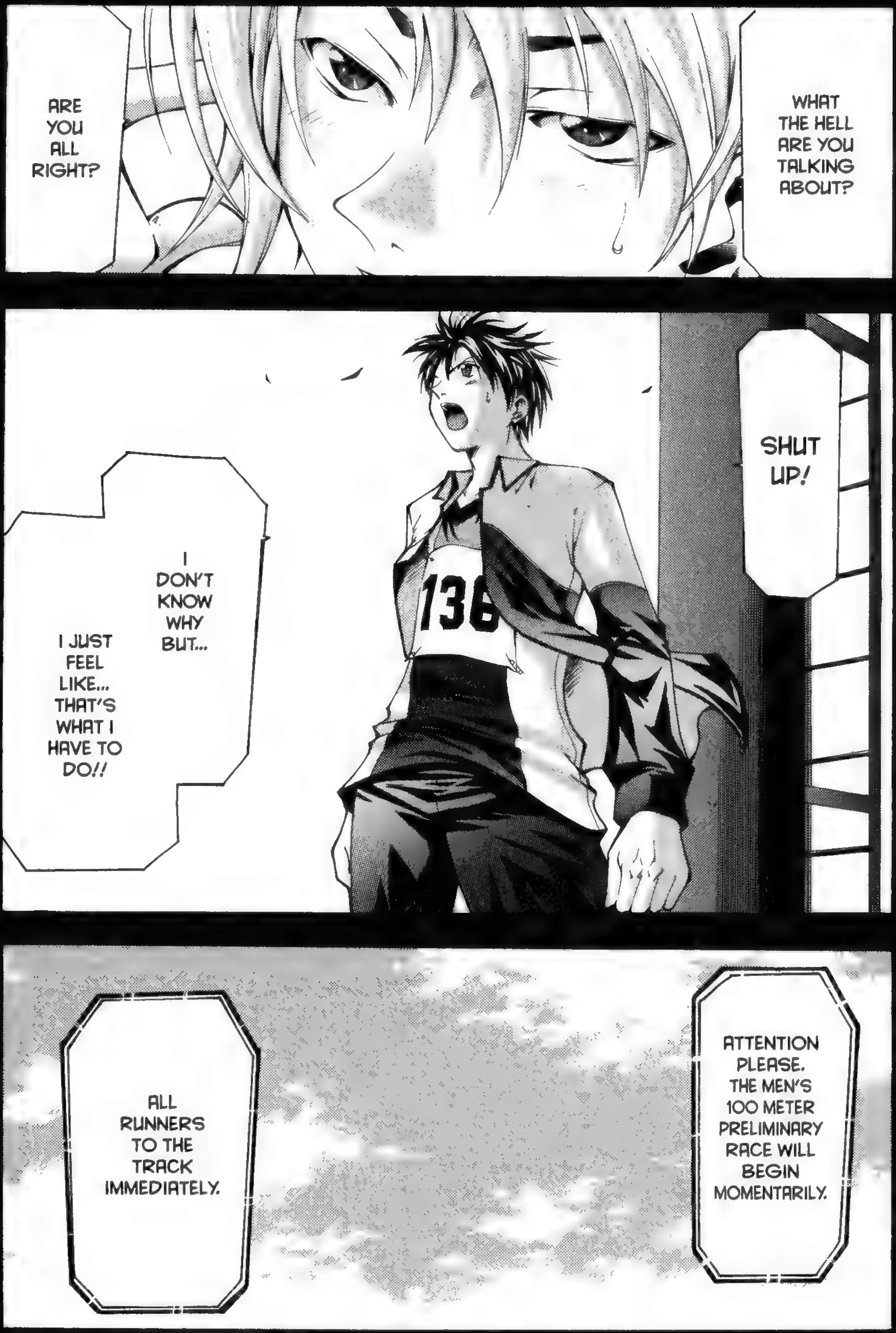

WELL, I'D BETTER GET GOING.
DON'T BE LATE OKAY, AKITSUKI?
... OKAY.
... I GET IT.
YOU FEEL LIKE, YOU CAN NEVER LIVE UP TO THIS TSUDA GUY...
...SO YOU FIGURE SHE'LL JUST KEEP SHOOTING YOU DOWN IF YOU TRY.
... SHUT UP.
WELL, I DON'T BLAME YOU.
HE SOUNDS LIKE THE KIND OF GUY YOU COULD COUNT ON, AND HE TOOK THE TRACK TEAM REALLY SERIOUSLY...


ON TOP OF THAT, HE TOOK FIRST PLACE IN THE NATION.
……
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, A GUY LIKE YOU JUST CAN'T—
OH... SHUT UP.
SHUT UP, SHUT UP!!
SHUUUUT UP!!
136


W- WHAT'S GOING ON? THAT GUY'S SCREAMING.
HE'S PROBABLY JUST CRAZY.
AH...
YAMATO-KUN.
WHO IS THAT? WHAT SCHOOL'S UNIFORM IS HE WEARING?
I DUNNO.
FAWUMP
ごそっ
WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING? WHY DOES HE...
...ALWAYS HAVE TO EMBARRASS ME LIKE THIS!


W-WHAT THE HELL'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
YOU SCARED THE SHIT OUTTA ME!
LISTEN, I KNOW ALL THAT...
...ALREADY, OKAY.
ASAHINA STILL LIKES TSUDA AND...
IN HER EYES, I'LL NEVER BE HALF THE GUY HE WAS.
I'M AWARE OF THAT.
asics
THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT.
WHAT I SHOULD DO!!
AND?
DID YOU COME UP WITH ANY IDEAS?

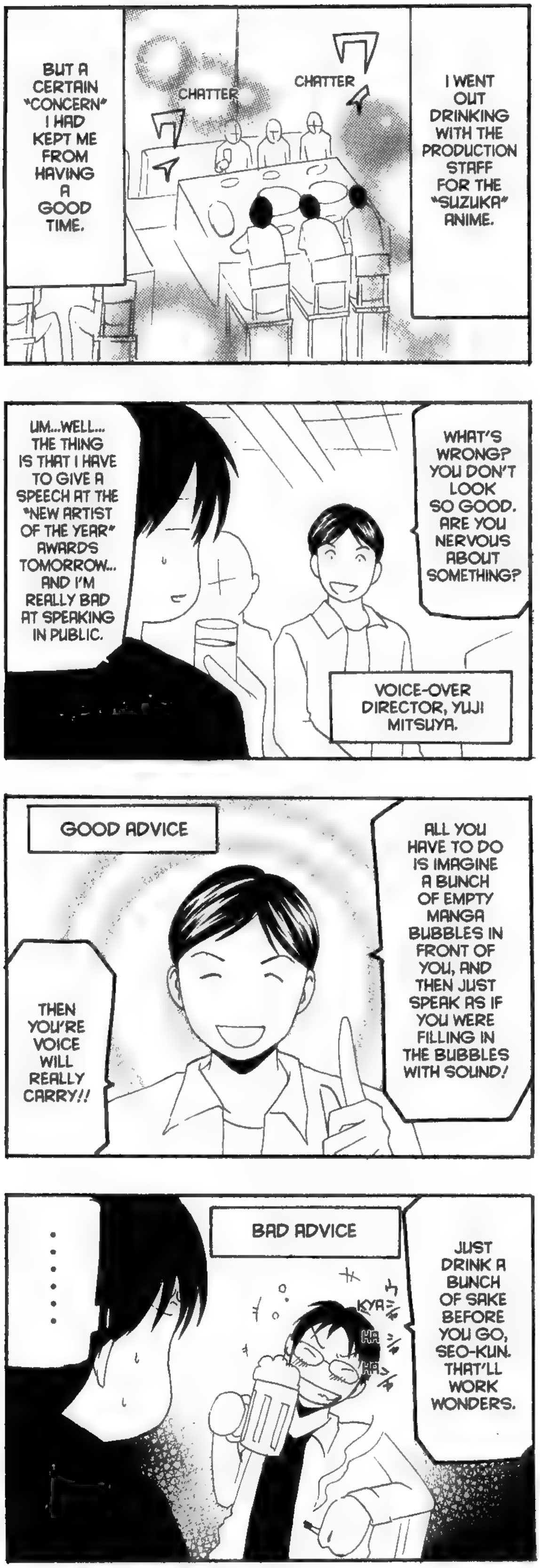

I'M DONE WITH SITTING AROUND AND WORRYING ABOUT IT...
HUH?
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND... I'M GONNA BE THE NUMBER ONE ATHLETE IN ALL OF JAPAN!!


WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SHUT UP!
136
I DON'T KNOW WHY BUT...
I JUST FEEL LIKE... THAT'S WHAT I HAVE TO DO!!
ATTENTION PLEASE. THE MEN'S 100 METER PRELIMINARY RACE WILL BEGIN MOMENTARILY.
ALL RUNNERS TO THE TRACK IMMEDIATELY.

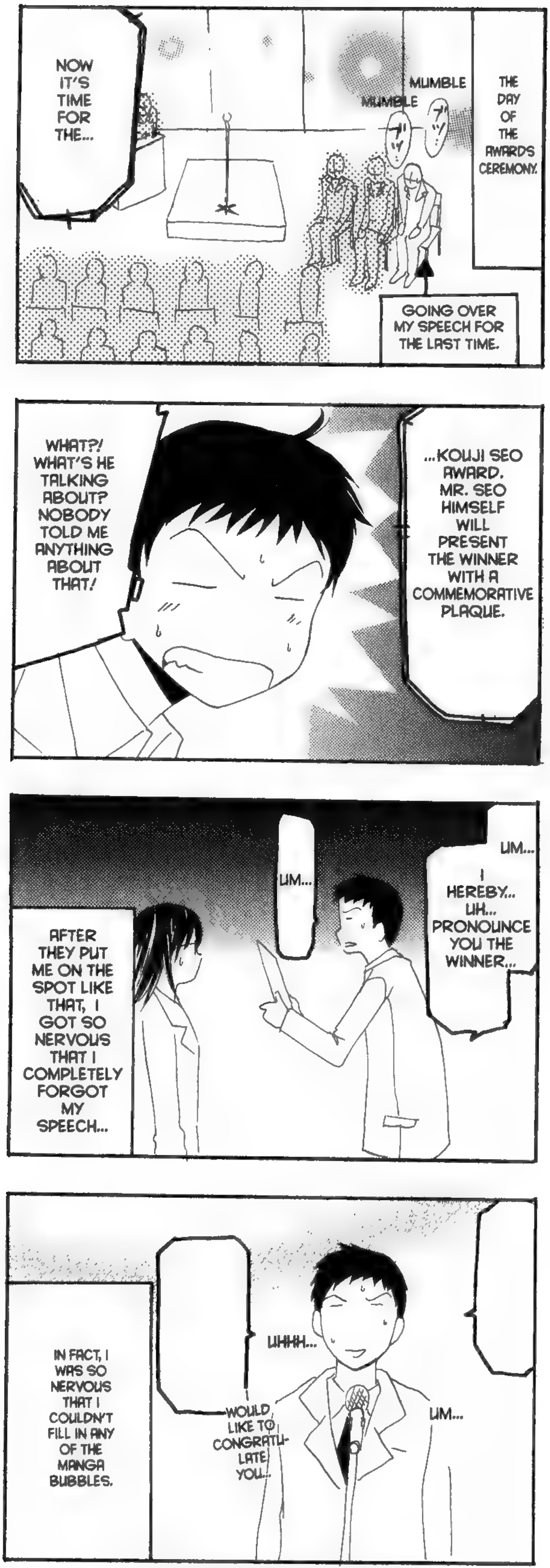
CONTINUED IN BOOK 8

SPECIAL BONUS MANGA

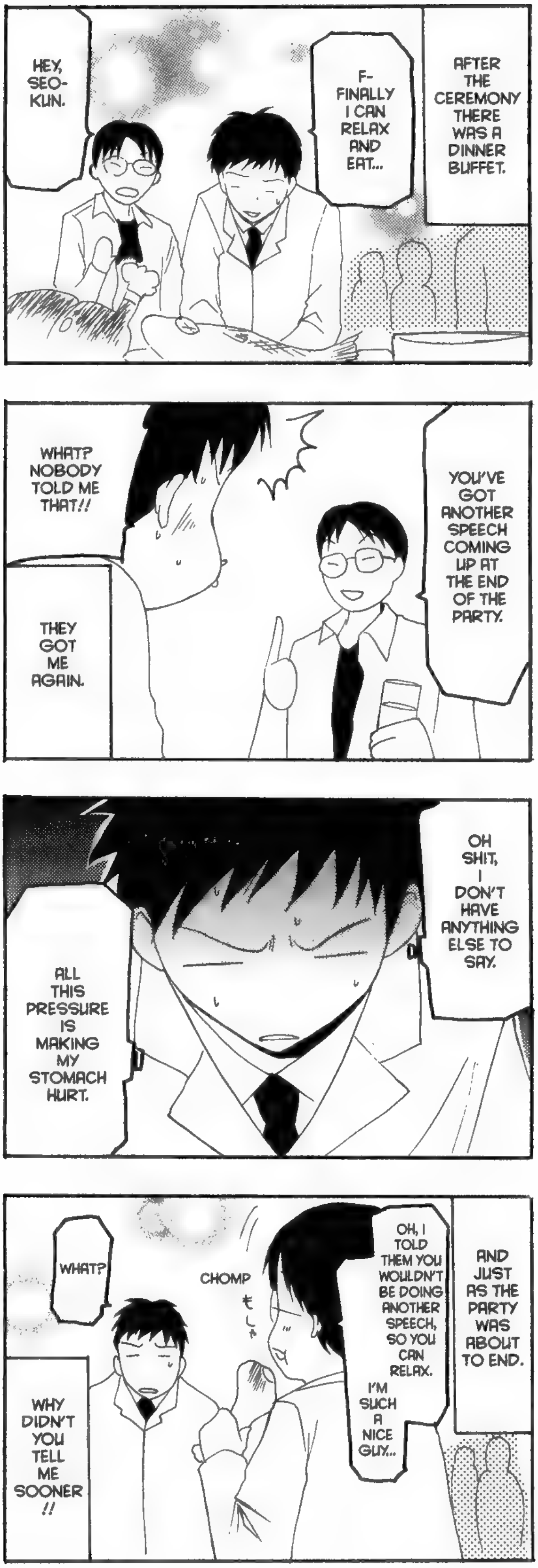
PLEASE DON'T DRAG ME OUT IN PUBLIC (DAY 1)


I WENT OUT DRINKING WITH THE PRODUCTION STAFF FOR THE "SUZUKA" ANIME.
CHATTER
CHATTER
BUT A CERTAIN "CONCERN" I HAD KEPT ME FROM HAVING A GOOD TIME.
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD. ARE YOU NERVOUS ABOUT SOMETHING?
VOICE-OVER DIRECTOR, YUJI MITSUYA.
UM...WELL... THE THING IS THAT I HAVE TO GIVE A SPEECH AT THE "NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR" AWARDS TOMORROW... AND I'M REALLY BAD AT SPEAKING IN PUBLIC.
GOOD ADVICE
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS IMAGINE A BUNCH OF EMPTY MANGA BUBBLES IN FRONT OF YOU, AND THEN JUST SPEAK AS IF YOU WERE FILLING IN THE BUBBLES WITH SOUND!
THEN YOU'RE VOICE WILL REALLY CARRY!!
BAD ADVICE
JUST DRINK A BUNCH OF SAKE BEFORE YOU GO, SEO-KUN. THAT'LL WORK WONDERS.
KYA
HA
HA
......

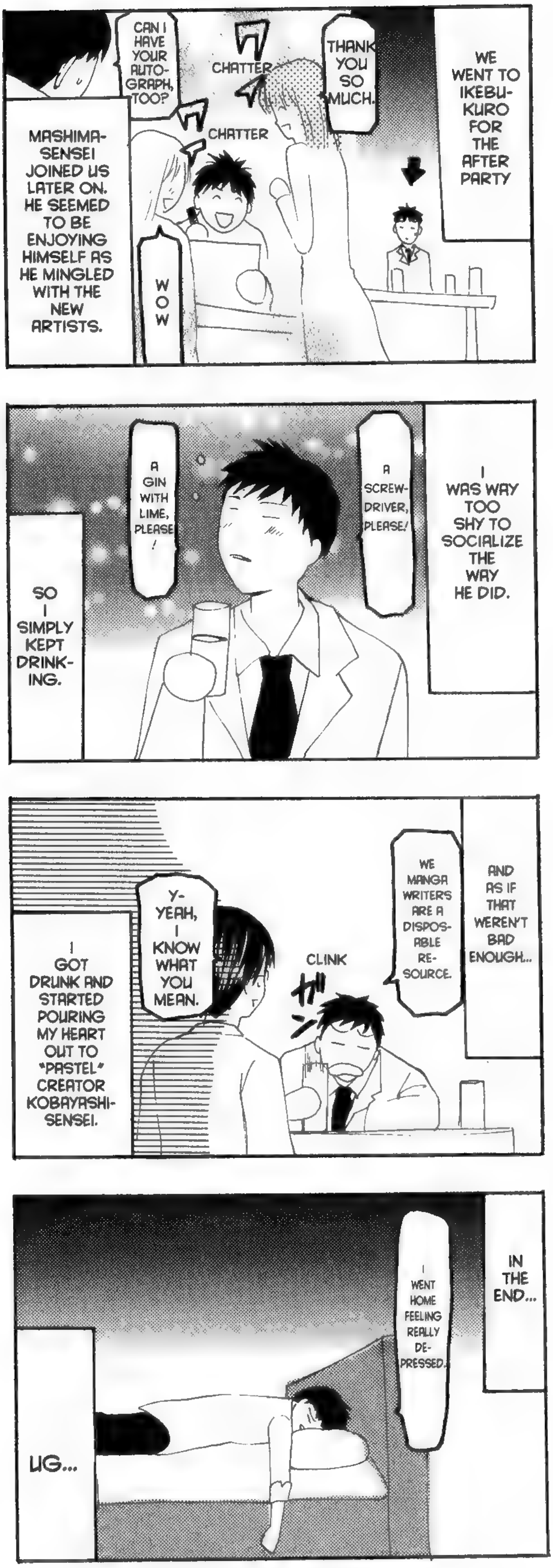
DAY 2


THE DAY OF THE AWARDS CEREMONY.
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
GOING OVER MY SPEECH FOR THE LAST TIME.
NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE...
...KOUJI SEO AWARD. MR. SEO HIMSELF WILL PRESENT THE WINNER WITH A COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE.
WHAT?! WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT? NOBODY TOLD ME ANYTHING ABOUT THAT!
UM... I HEREBY... UH... PRONOUNCE YOU THE WINNER...
UM...
AFTER THEY PUT ME ON THE SPOT LIKE THAT, I GOT SO NERVOUS THAT I COMPLETELY FORGOT MY SPEECH...
UM...
UHHH...
WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE YOU...
IN FACT, I WAS SO NERVOUS THAT I COULDN'T FILL IN ANY OF THE MANGA BUBBLES.

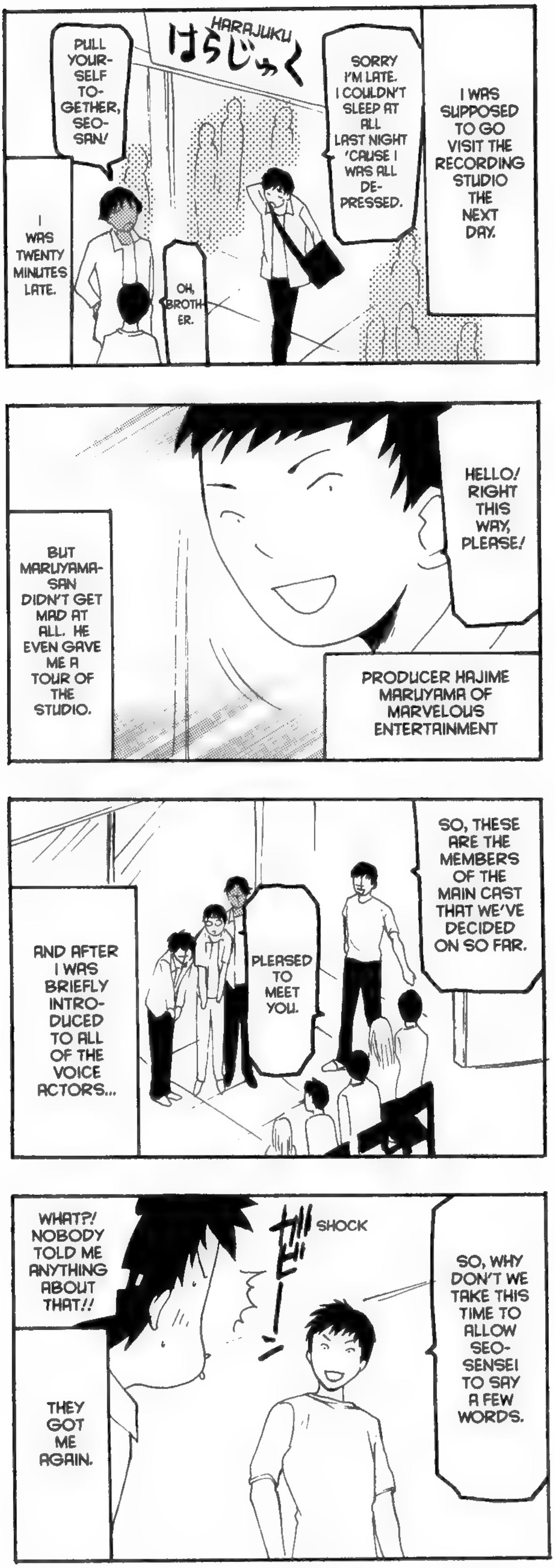
THEY TOOK A COMMEMORATIVE PHOTO OF ME AFTER THAT AND I LOOKED TOTALLY TENSE.

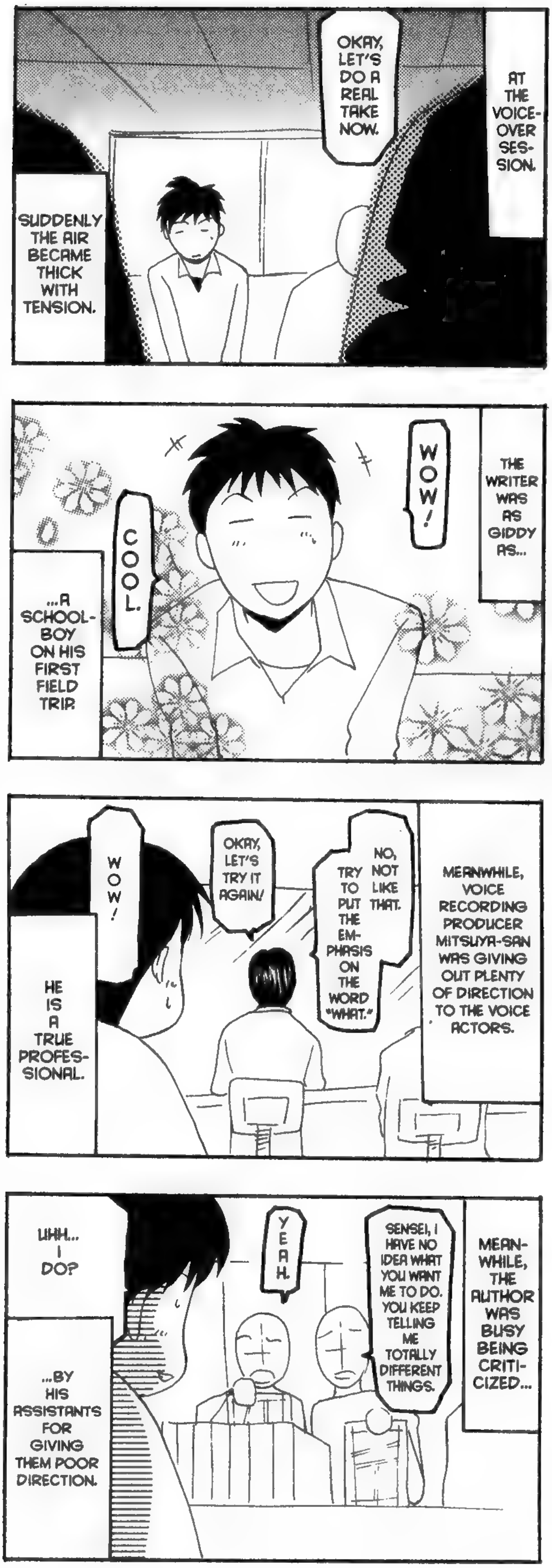

AFTER THE CEREMONY THERE WAS A DINNER BUFFET.
F-FINALLY I CAN RELAX AND EAT...
HEY, SEO-KUN.
YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER SPEECH COMING UP AT THE END OF THE PARTY.
WHAT? NOBODY TOLD ME THAT!!
THEY GOT ME AGAIN.
OH SHIT, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO SAY.
ALL THIS PRESSURE IS MAKING MY STOMACH HURT.
AND JUST AS THE PARTY WAS ABOUT TO END.
OH, I TOLD THEM YOU WOULDN'T BE DOING ANOTHER SPEECH, SO YOU CAN RELAX.
I'M SUCH A NICE GUY...
CHOMP
もしゃ
WHAT?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SOONER!!

THE AFTER PARTY

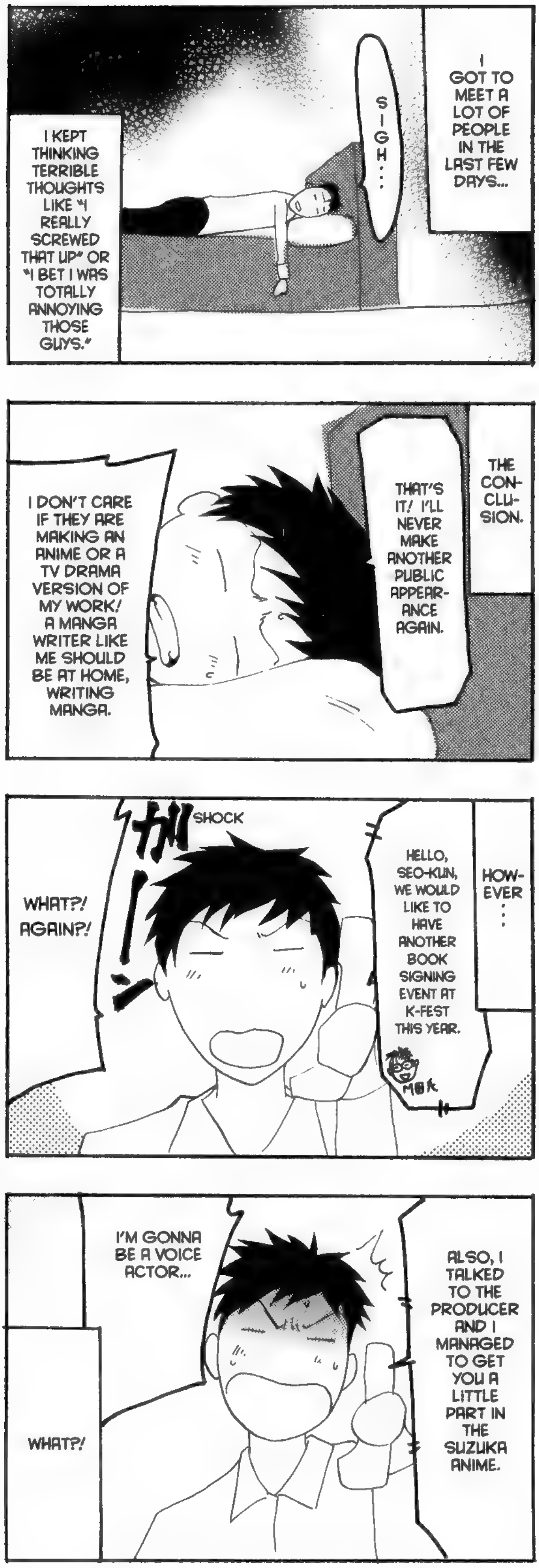

WE WENT TO IKEBUKURO FOR THE AFTER PARTY
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
CHATTER
CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH, TOO?
CHATTER
MASHIMA-SENSEI JOINED US LATER ON. HE SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING HIMSELF AS HE MINGLED WITH THE NEW ARTISTS.
WOW
I WAS WAY TOO SHY TO SOCIALIZE THE WAY HE DID.
A SCREWDRIVER, PLEASE!
A GIN WITH LIME, PLEASE!
SO I SIMPLY KEPT DRINKING.
AND AS IF THAT WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH...
WE MANGA WRITERS ARE A DISPOSABLE RESOURCE.
CLINK
Y-YEAH, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
I GOT DRUNK AND STARTED POURING MY HEART OUT TO "PASTEL" CREATOR KOBAYASHI-SENSEI.
IN THE END...
I WENT HOME FEELING REALLY DEPRESSED.
UG...

THE THIRD DAY


I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO VISIT THE RECORDING STUDIO THE NEXT DAY.
SORRY I'M LATE. I COULDN'T SLEEP AT ALL LAST NIGHT 'CAUSE I WAS ALL DEPRESSED.
HARAJUKU
はらじゅく
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, SEO-SAN!
OH, BROTHER.
I WAS TWENTY MINUTES LATE.
HELLO! RIGHT THIS WAY, PLEASE!
PRODUCER HAJIME MARUYAMA OF MARVELOUS ENTERTAINMENT
BUT MARUYAMA-SAN DIDN'T GET MAD AT ALL. HE EVEN GAVE ME A TOUR OF THE STUDIO.
SO, THESE ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE MAIN CAST THAT WE'VE DECIDED ON SO FAR.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
AND AFTER I WAS BRIEFLY INTRODUCED TO ALL OF THE VOICE ACTORS...
SO, WHY DON'T WE TAKE THIS TIME TO ALLOW SEO-SENSEI TO SAY A FEW WORDS.
ガビーン!
SHOCK
WHAT?! NOBODY TOLD ME ANYTHING ABOUT THAT!!
THEY GOT ME AGAIN.


AT THE VOICE-OVER SESSION.
OKAY, LET'S DO A REAL TAKE NOW.
SUDDENLY THE AIR BECAME THICK WITH TENSION.
THE WRITER WAS AS GIDDY AS...
WOW!
COOL.
...A SCHOOLBOY ON HIS FIRST FIELD TRIP.
MEANWHILE, VOICE RECORDING PRODUCER MITSUYA-SAN WAS GIVING OUT PLENTY OF DIRECTION TO THE VOICE ACTORS.
NO, NOT LIKE THAT. TRY TO PUT THE EMPHASIS ON THE WORD "WHAT."
OKAY, LET'S TRY IT AGAIN!
WOW!
HE IS A TRUE PROFESSIONAL.
MEANWHILE, THE AUTHOR WAS BUSY BEING CRITICIZED...
SENSEI, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO. YOU KEEP TELLING ME TOTALLY DIFFERENT THINGS.
YEAH.
UHH... I DO?
...BY HIS ASSISTANTS FOR GIVING THEM POOR DIRECTION.

THE FOURTH DAY


I GOT TO MEET A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS...
SIGH...
I KEPT THINKING TERRIBLE THOUGHTS LIKE "I REALLY SCREWED THAT UP" OR "I BET I WAS TOTALLY ANNOYING THOSE GUYS."
THE CONCLUSION.
THAT'S IT! I'LL NEVER MAKE ANOTHER PUBLIC APPEARANCE AGAIN.
I DON'T CARE IF THEY ARE MAKING AN ANIME OR A TV DRAMA VERSION OF MY WORK! A MANGA WRITER LIKE ME SHOULD BE AT HOME, WRITING MANGA.
HOWEVER...
HELLO, SEO-KUN, WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ANOTHER BOOK SIGNING EVENT AT K-FEST THIS YEAR.
SHOCK
WHAT?! AGAIN?!
ALSO, I TALKED TO THE PRODUCER AND I MANAGED TO GET YOU A LITTLE PART IN THE SUZUKA ANIME.
I'M GONNA BE A VOICE ACTOR...
WHAT?!

TO BE CONTINUED...?

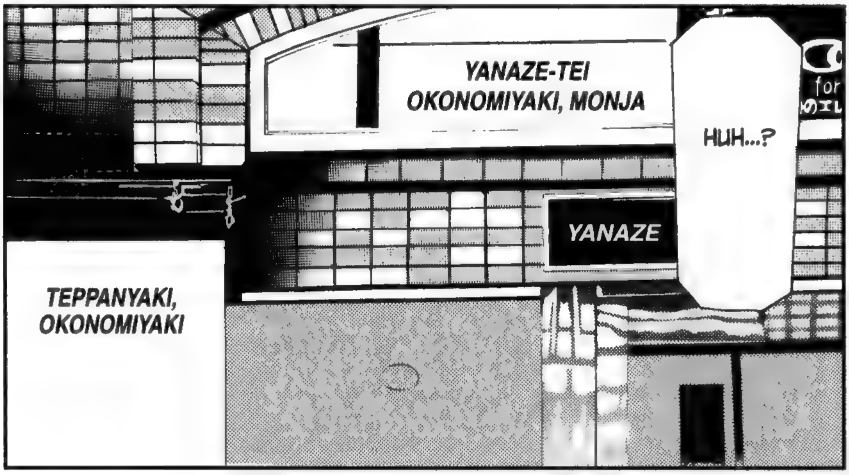
WHY DO YOU KEEP PICKING ON ME?

Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more an art than a science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

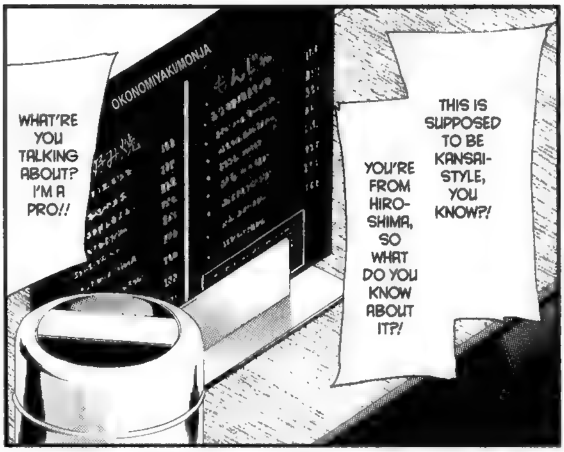
Okonomiyaki and *Monja,* Page 102

Okonomiyaki is often referred to as a Japanese pancake. It's made of batter and a mixture of meat, vegetables, egg, and sometimes noodles. At most *okonomiyaki* restaurants your table will have a built-in grill, and you can cook your own *okonomiyaki* right at the table. *Monja* has similar ingredients, but it isn't pancake shaped and is generally a bit runnier.

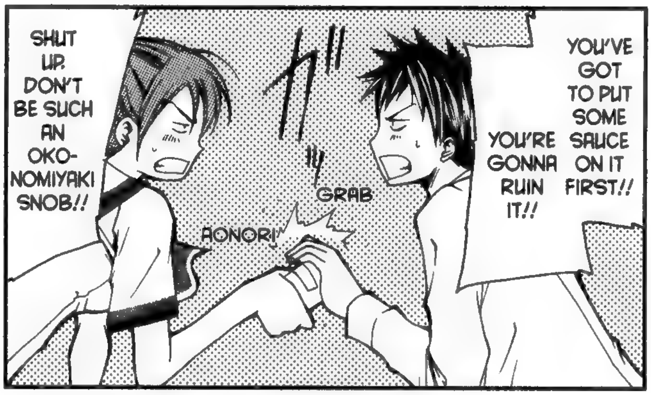

HUH...?
YANAZE-TEI OKONOMIYAKI, MONJA
YANAZE
TEPPANYAKI, OKONOMIYAKI

Kansai vs Hiroshima, Page 104

There are two *okonomiyaki* meccas in Japan—Kansai (Osaka) and Hiroshima. Hiroshima style often comes with noodles mixed in and sometimes has a fried egg on top.

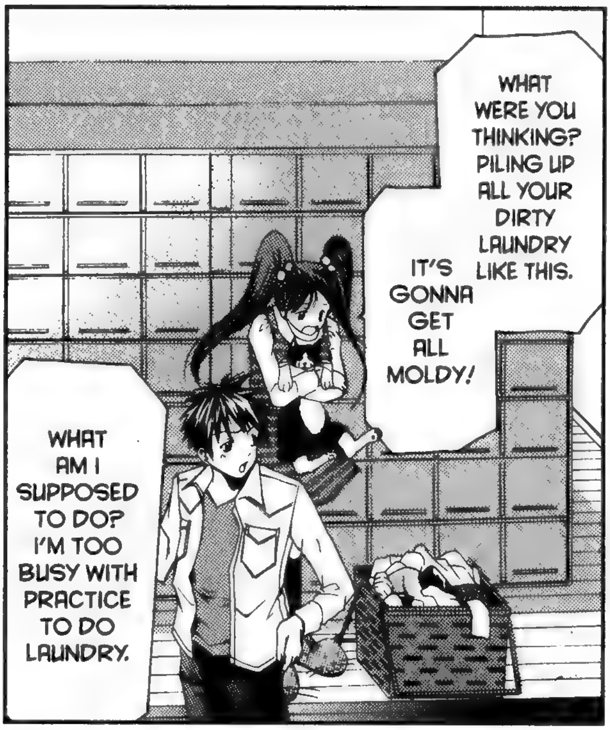

THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE KANSAI-STYLE, YOU KNOW?!
YOU'RE FROM HIRO-SHIMA, SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?!
もんじゃ
OKONOMIYAKI/MONJA
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M A PRO!!

Aonori and other toppings, Page 104


YOU'VE GOT TO PUT SOME SAUCE ON IT FIRST!!
YOU'RE GONNA RUIN IT!!
GRAB
AONORI
SHUT UP. DON'T BE SUCH AN OKONOMIYAKI SNOB!!

After it's done, *okonomiyaki* is generally slathered with sauce and mayonnaise and then sprinkled with fish flakes and *aonori* seaweed.

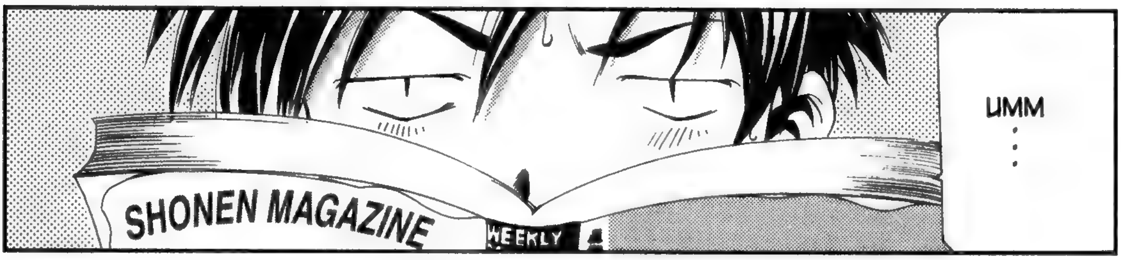
Mold, Page 152


WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? PILING UP ALL YOUR DIRTY LAUNDRY LIKE THIS.
IT'S GONNA GET ALL MOLDY!
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? I'M TOO BUSY WITH PRACTICE TO DO LAUNDRY.

Japan is a very humid place, particularly during the hot and rainy summer. Clothes really do get moldy if you leave them piled up for too long.

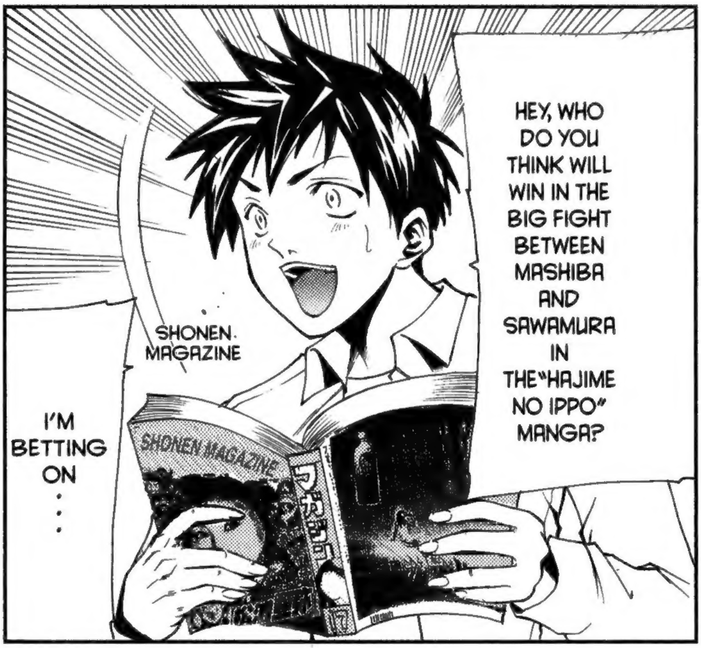
Shonen Magazine, Page 155

Yamato is reading *Shonen Magazine,* a very popular *shonen* weekly manga magazine published by Kodansha.


UMM . . .
SHONEN MAGAZINE
WEEKLY

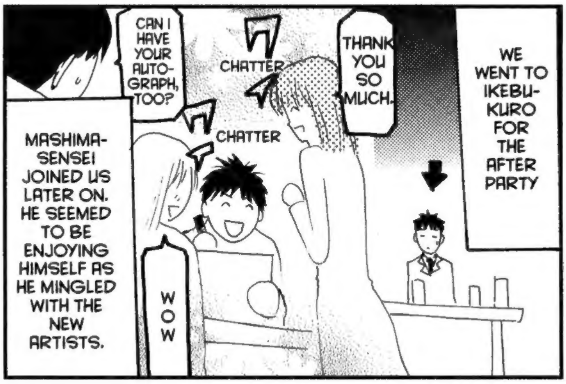
Hajime no Ippo, Page 156

Hajime no Ippo is a wildly popular boxing manga that runs in *Shonen Magazine*


HEY, WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN IN THE BIG FIGHT BETWEEN MASHIBA AND SAWAMURA IN THE "HAJIME NO IPPO" MANGA?
SHONEN MAGAZINE
I'M BETTING ON...
SHONEN MAGAZINE

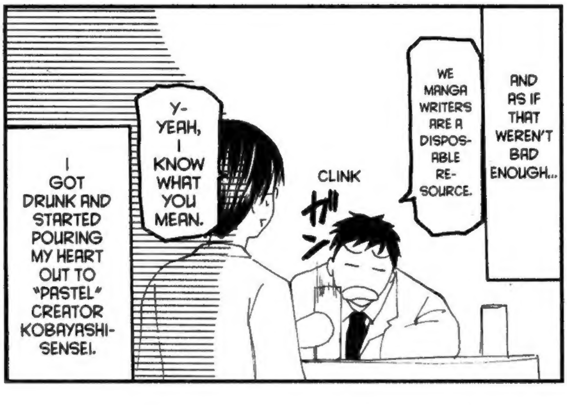
Mashima-sensei, Page 186

This is probably a reference to Hiro Mashima, who is known for the *Shonen Magazine* titles *Rave Master* and *Fairy Tail. Fairy Tail* is coming to you in English in April 2008, courtesy of Del Rey!


WE WENT TO IKEBUKURO FOR THE AFTER PARTY
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
CHATTER
CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH, TOO?
CHATTER
MASHIMA-SENSEI JOINED US LATER ON. HE SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING HIMSELF AS HE MINGLED WITH THE NEW ARTISTS.
WOW

Pastel, Page 186

Pastel is another popular Kodansha *shonen* title about a typical high school kid who ends up living with the girl he's got a crush on. Look for Del Rey's English version of *Pastel* in your local bookshop.


AND AS IF THAT WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH...
WE MANGA WRITERS ARE A DISPOSABLE RESOURCE.
CLINK
Y-YEAH, I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
I GOT DRUNK AND STARTED POURING MY HEART OUT TO "PASTEL" CREATOR KOBAYASHI-SENSEI.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

It's Honoka's birthday, and Yamato wants to find the perfect gift. Since Yamato is absolutely clueless about shopping for a girl, he recruits the reluctant Suzuka to help him. But Yamato's plan unexpectedly backfires when Honoka catches a glimpse of Yamato and Suzuka shopping together. Now the jealous Honoka is convinced that Yamato still has feelings for Suzuka. Will Honoka forgive Yamato, or could this be the end of their tumultuous relationship?

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